THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

and

THE MYSTERY OF UNGODLINESS

Their Essence and the Contrast Between Them
Viewed in the Light of the Word of God

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Viewed in the Light of the Word of God

By
S. H. FROHLICH

ST. GALLEN
1838

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THIS treatise is published by the Apostolic Christian Church in both the English and German languages and has been reprinted many times since it was first issued in 1838. The Apostolic Christian Assemblies over the entire world accept this treatise as a fair presentation of their hope. One Assembly of the Apostolic Christian Church is located at

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INTRODUCTION

This protest applies particularly to Infant Baptism and the General Laxity of Discipline in the established Catholic and Protestant churches.

At the time of its original publication in the German language, in 1838, S. H. Frohlich's followers suffered considerably by the persecution of the Established Protestant and Catholic churches which dominated the European governments.

Toleration came later, and although the "Mystery of Godliness and the Mystery of Ungodliness" was written while this severe government regulation of worship existed, it also has a very striking application to fallacies which have continued to the present day.

The scriptural references quoted in this treatise should appeal to such "noble" ones, referred to in Acts xvii: 10, 13, who "searched the scriptures daily whether those things were so," namely, what Paul had been telling them.

Therefore the reader is requested to carefully weigh the following argument, by means of the references given, and by the entire Word of God, by which every doctrine and faith must be proved or disproved.

In doing this we must however bear in mind that the rock which contains the living water must be prayerfully spoken to, that it may open itself to us. "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James iv: 6.) "And the Rock is Christ." (1 Cor. x: 4.)

Respectfully,

THE TRANSLATOR.

DEDICATORY ADDRESS

(From Rom. 1).

"To all that be *in Rome, beloved of God, called to be saints:* Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ.

"First I thank my God through Jesus Christ for you all, that your faith is spoken of throughout the world.

"Now I would not have you ignorant, brethren, that oftentimes I purposed to come unto you (but was let hitherto,) that I might have some *fruit* among you also, even as among other Gentiles.

"I am *a debtor* both to the Greeks, and the Barbarians (the Germans and the non-Germans), both to the wise and the unwise.

"So as much as in me is, I am ready to preach the gospel to you that are *in Rome* also.

"For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is *a power of God* unto salvation to every one that believeth; to *the Jews* (the self-righteous) and also to *the Greek* (the lawless).

"For therein is the *righteousness of God* revealed from *faith to faith;* as it is written: The just shall live by faith.

"For the *wrath of God* is revealed from heaven against all *ungodliness and unrighteousness* of men, who *hold* the truth in *unrighteousness;*

"*Wherefore God also gave them up* to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonor their own bodies between themselves:

"Who changed the *truth* of God into a *lie,* and *worshipped* and served the *creature* more than the Creator, who is blessed forever, Amen."

This, beloved, is the text which serves as a foundation for the following pages, which herewith are commended to the hand of God and offered to you for your constant meditation, having in view that message recorded in Rev. 14: "*Fear God,* and give *glory to Him;* for the *hour of His judgment* is come: and worship *Him* that made heaven, and earth, and the sea, and the foundation of waters." "Here is need of the *patience of the saints* that ***keep the commandments of God*** and the ***faith*** or the ***testimony of Jesus.***"

THE MYSTERY OF GODLINESS

AND THE

MYSTERY OF UNGODLINESS

§ 1. In his first epistle to Timothy (3, 15, 16) the apostle Paul speaks of a *"Mystery of Godliness."* What he means by this, he at once explains thus: "God was manifest in the flesh, justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." Concerning this mystery of godliness the apostle, with reference to his times, makes this twofold statement:

(1) That it is the *pillar and ground of the truth;* and

(2) That according to the harmonious confession of all believers, it is without controversy great.

"God was manifest in the flesh." For mankind's sake, lost and forlorn, God has sent His only begotten Son from His bosom into the world to seek and to save that which was lost. The Word, which from the beginning was with God, was made flesh, took the form of flesh and blood to become through the glory of the Father the first fruits of the dead, and to gather many with Him into eternal glory.

"The Son of God is justified in the Spirit." God is now glorified in the Son, whom He has raised up from the dead and who restores to Him that which was lost. The wisdom of God becomes justified in all that, through the Son, become His children. The Father bestows upon them the Spirit of His Son, Christ's representative on earth, to make them partakers of His divine nature, to

guide them into all truth, and to remain with them forever and ever. (Rom. 1, 4; Matt. 11, 19).

"God's Son seen of Angels," or His messengers, whom the Son in His stead sends with the gospel out into the world, as the Father has sent His Son. The word of His messengers God confirms as His own. Whosoever rejects them with their message rejects Him. But they that receive their word as the word of God receive Him and shall be given powers of the world to come. (Matt. 10, 40; John 14, 16-20; 15, 26 F.; 16, 25 ff).

"The Son of God preached unto the Gentiles." Through Israel's unbelief and fall the salvation in Christ has gone forth to all the (peoples) that they, too, may become joint-heirs to the promise that God had given to Abraham. The gospel is sent to every creature. Thus God has opened the gates of faith and given repentance unto life also to the Gentiles, as many as are called, until the number of all the people saved, that is those that are ordained to eternal life, shall be complete. (Rom. 11; Gal. 3).

"The Son of God is believed on in the World." Though not all that hear and know the gospel believe unto salvation, there are still some who do so believe and are saved; and even the existence of a (nominal) Christendom in the world, that confesses the Lord Jesus with the lips (but does not believe in the heart) will, on the day of judgment, be a testimony over and against the world, that He had been believed on at a time and that the name of the Saviour had been known, so that they might have been saved, had they been willing to accept Him. (Luc. 10, 11; Rom. 3, 3 f.; I Cor. 9, 22).

"The Son of God received up in Glory." He is sitting at the right hand of the power of God, ruling as king forever, until the Father shall have made His enemies His foot-

stool,—to come again in the glory of the Father, as judge of the world, that His saints who have been obedient unto Him and followed Him in His temptation may see His glory the Father has given to Him, and become joint-heirs with Him. (Luc. 22, 28-30).

§ 2. This is the *mystery of Godliness.* From this fountain of life alone flows the living water of *godliness* which has the promise of this life and the life to come for all who *exercise* themselves to have a conscience void of offense toward God (1 Tim. 1, 5, 18 f.; 4, 7-10; 1 Pet. 3, 21). Therein alone will they find life and blessings in abundance (John 10, 11, Rom. 5, 17). Therefrom, alone can they draw pure and untroubled joy and bliss, whereof those know nothing that serve the tabernacle, and hew for themselves broken cisterns which hold no water, and reject the fountain of living water. (Heb. 13, 10; Jer. 2, 12). But this fountain of life is *a mystery* deeper than Jacob's well (John 4, 11) and who has nothing to draw with can not take grace upon grace from its abundance. "Dost thou *believe* on the *Son of God?*" (John 9, 35)—"If thou believest with all thine heart thou mayest take." (Acts 8, 37). But if you do not believe, the fountain is closed to you: for *Christ Jesus* and the *godly life in Him* is *a mystery* (2 Tim. 3, 12). God has sworn that "the perverse generation, that has an evil heart of *unbelief,* shall not enter into His rest;" and "we *see* that they could not enter in because of *unbelief.*" (Heb. 3, 18, 19; 4, 1 ff; Matt. 11, 25-30; 1 Cor. 1, 18-31).

This mystery of godliness, then, is the *pillar* and *ground of truth.* Upon it rests the truth which, next to godliness, is our hope for eternal life (Titus 1, 1-2). Now, he that is (void of judgment) concerning the faith in the revelation in which God has manifested Himself through the Son will

also be unfit for godliness here on earth and for eternal salvation (2 Tim. 3, 7). He does not know the *truth* as it, together with the *grace,* is in *Jesus Christ* (Eph. 4, 21; John 1, 14-18); the truth is not in him, and he does not hear (heed) the voice of Christ (John 8, 10); and if he, in this condition, still claims *to know* God, he only manifests his *untruthfulness:* "for no man knoweth the Father, save the Son, and he to whomsoever the Son will reveal him," hence only in the Son and through the Son (I John 2 and 5). Such proud despisers of the truth as it is in Jesus build their house on *mere sand,* even though they may hope to be saved; their house has neither *pillars* nor *a firm foundation,* for they lack *Christ* who is the *truth,* as He is also the only way and the life; they therefore, lack also His representative, the spirit of promise, the spirit of sonship, the spirit of freedom, who is *a spirit of truth* and whom the world may not receive. Whosoever does not accept the word of the truth of the gospel (Eph. 1, 13; Col. 1, 5) will not be sealed with the Holy Spirit of truth, for the inheritance of the saints, unto the day of redemption.

But this mystery of godliness as Paul says "God was manifest in the flesh," is not only the pillar and ground of the truth, it is also *without controversy great.* Nor was it recognized and worshipped only as a *great and deep mystery* in which *are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge* (Col. 2, 2-3); for what benefit could we derive from a *hidden* treasure, that we could *not find?* (Matt. 13, 44). No, this great, deep mystery was *manifested* to the believers and saints of the Light through the spirit of glory and God with whom they were anointed and sealed, and who—dwelling also in the children of God,—searches all things, yea, the deep things of God (Deut. 29, 29; I Cor. 2). And the deeper they looked into this mystery of godliness the more

were they filled with exalted happiness, the nearer did they approach the glorious image of Christ. (2 Cor. 3-4). And concerning this there was only one voice and opinion among all who experienced it; all agreed therein, that there is no salvation or life for us excepting in Christ (Acts 4, 12).

§ 3. So it was in the beginning and from the beginning. But it did not remain so long. Soon the old seducer and liar and murderer, whose name is devil and satan, disguised as an angel of light, beneath the mask of godliness and orthodoxy, through the hands of faithful servants (2 Cor. 11) endeavored to sow his tares upon the field, and to pollute the pure fountain. And it can not be said that he did not, at least in part, succeed, even during the lifetime of the apostles, who zealously warned against it (Acts 20, 28 ff; Rev. 2, 23;) and then announced *with certainty the coming* of this destruction (1 Thes. 5; 1 Tim. 4; 2 Tim. 3; 2 Pet. 2; Jude, etc.), and even then lamented because the first signs of this destruction had already crept in (1 John 2, 4; 2 Thes. 2). Especially in this last named chapter, in which Paul treats explicitly of this falling away from God, that was to be expected, and of the iniquity of men, and where (in verse 7) he does not say: For the *mystery of iniquity* doth already work *in secret,* but much more significantly he expresses himself thus: "And now ye know what *withholdeth* that he might be revealed *in his time.* For the *mystery of iniquity doth already work:* only he who *now letteth* will let, until he be taken out of the way. And then shall the *Wicked* be revealed whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: Even him *whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders,* and with all deceivableness of unrighteous-

ness in them that perish; because they received not the love of the truth, that they might be saved."

Here the apostle speaks of the mystery of ungodliness, as in 1 Tim. 3, 15 he treats of the mystery of godliness; and as the latter is: God was manifest in the flesh, so the former signifies: Satan is manifested in the flesh, proven as Satan in his spirit and his works of falsehood and darkness in those that will be lost; he also appeared to his messengers and preachers of falsehood, was preached unto the (nations), believed on in the world and will depart into damnation. As *Christ, the Son of God,* in His time appeared in human form to become by His obedience unto the death on the cross, the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him, so the *antichrist,* the first born *son of Satan* will at his appointed time come in human form to become the author of eternal damnation unto all that obey him and his lies.

It is therefore of no avail to say that Christ, by His death upon the cross, had already destroyed and broken Satan's unholy power over man and that because of this nothing more was to be feared from this side. Whoever reasons thus will easily fall the prey of a second and more harmful seduction. For Christ, as the Lamb of God, has certainly borne the sins of the world, as far as *Adam* had become guilty of them. But since then Satan appeared again in *another form* as man's seducer to frustrate the redemption in Christ for the majority; but the cause of this can not be laid to Adam's but to man's own unbelief in Christ. For the prophecies of the apostles were not made until a long time after His death and resurrection and their fulfillment referred to a later time, when Satan in human form would exercise such an injurious power over the so-called Christian church and exercise it *under* (*the cover of*)

the name of Christ by denying himself and *his own name,* proclaiming that there was no longer a devil, that such belief and teaching had been fiction and fable, with which to frighten little children in olden times.

§ 4. In the light of such circumstances, is not the appearance of Satan in human form a *mystery?* Yes, indeed, a mystery, in fact, it is the mystery of *ungodliness.* Very few know its incognito. The most are helping him with all their strength and take his part, thereby pursuing and gaining *their own selfish ends,* although they make it appear and perhaps imagine themselves—that they are working for the kingdom of God and Christ. Truly, Satan's reappearance on the scene of combat, after he had once been conquered by Christ, is surprising, still more so, because God should permit him to thus cause deceit, greater than was the first in Adam. If we do not believe the prophecies of the apostles and consider our old inborn nature as being the original divine nature, Christ is superseded, and we become, without our knowing it, the more certain the prey of *this second and more harmful deceit* of Satan, as a just punishment for all that think themselves wiser than God and despise His word.

Hence, Christ's victory over Satan has not made this *second seduction* and this *second* falling away from God impossible; but rather more possible (John 3, 19; 9, 39 ff). Only God's elect, who make their calling and election sure by a complete sanctification, are safe from it; because they are in the hands of the Father and His Son, from which no man shall snatch them. For all others, however, who are negligent in this (2 Pet. 1), and derive their Christianity from their birth and found it upon their being baptized in their childhood or other artificial forms (rites), without turning in earnest from the sin and the false gods and

the power of Satan, the danger is so much the greater and unavoidable. It is just these artificial (forms), ritual of divine service and of godliness—lacking the power of godliness—that constitutes the second greater deceit of Satan, and in the end will draw on (or cause) the second (eternal) death. (Rev. 20).

What the prince of darkness attempted but slowly and timidly while the guards of Zion were still on earth, he carried on more and more boldly and presumptuously after their departure, until he gradually had brought it about that his base coin *alone* was current in the entire kingdom and he henceforth was generally recognized as the master of the kingdom, while those stamped with the image and the superscription of Christ were persecuted into the utmost corners. The *false* (counterfeit) Christians were then considered the *true ones* and, consequently, the *true ones* had to be looked upon as *the false.* If one takes the devil for Christ he, on the other hand, must necessarily take Christ for the devil. This confusion or permutation we find confirmed even among the Jews, who, at the least, were eye and ear witnesses, not only when they gave out the Son of God, manifested in the flesh, for Beelzebub (Matt. 10, 25) and themselves pretended to be free, and the children of God while they surely were the slaves of sin and the children of Satan, but also when they pleaded for the liberty of the murderer Barabbas and condemned the Prince of Life to the death on the cross (John 5, 43 ff).

§ 5. In this confusion of the devilish with the divine then, rests the *true mystery of ungodliness.* And what Paul says of the mystery of godliness, we must, in reverse proportion also apply to the mystery of ungodliness. If the former is the pillar and ground of the *truth,* the latter, in like manner, is the pillar and ground of the *lie.* The

truth is, that only they are Christians and, in Christ, *children and heirs of God* who have the *Spirit of Christ* and, through the Spirit live as Christ has lived. (Rom. 8). *Falsehood and lie* on the other hand it is to say that all are Christians and children of God who *outwardly* join in doing what *the church* does and prescribes, that is, those that were *baptized in their childhood* and later on *receive the communion* even though they be *unbelieving* and *unconverted* and live in all the lusts and works of the devil, their father (John 8). But more than that. If Paul says of the mystery of *godliness* that, in the *first* time of the church, it had been *without controversy great,* it must likewise be said that in this *later* time of the church the mystery of *ungodliness* is without controversy great. As then and there all true believers and saints in Christ were *perfectly agreed* in this, so here and now the heterodox and unbelievers as followers of (or adherents to) the church of the antichrists, are perfectly agreed as to the *greatness* of the mystery of ungodliness. No one now dare with impunity in his opinion or his speech differ from them, just as in the earliest time of the church no one could, unpunished, entertain or introduce an opinion conflicting with the model of the divine doctrine. However, as then (in that time) gradually more and more voices of *error* and seduction were heard which, deviating from the truth, raised themselves louder and louder and finally gained the *upper hand:* so in these later days there have been more and more and louder and louder voices of *truth* for godliness which differ from the general seduction of the Bileamites and Nicolaitanes and with their confession of the truth as it is in Christ the *victory* will be theirs—no matter how little appearances now seem to predict this,—and the multitude of seducers and seduced shall perish by the word of His mouth. But if the *multitude*

reply to this: No, *we are many,* and we shall not lose nor be lost (cf. Eze. 33, 24-26), then let them read how such beguiling speech was prophesied proud Babylon long ago. (Rev. 18, 7-8). On what do they found their claim upon orthodoxy and justification? Upon their *old traditions* (or better, perhaps: the long standing of their traditional doctrine) and the *general concord* among their numerous disciples (followers)! And therefore right and truth should be on their side? Pray, turn again to the word of prophecy concerning the significance of the great harmony (concord) in the mystery of ungodliness, where you read: (And *all the world* wondered after the *beast.* And they worshipped the *dragon* which gave power unto the beast: and they worshipped the beast, saying, Who is like unto the beast? Who is able to make war with him? And it was given to him to make war with the *saints, and power was given unto him over all kindreds and tongues and nations; and all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world. If a man have an ear, let him hear!*—and the second beast deceived them that dwell on earth saying to them that they should make an *image* to the beast; and he had power to give *life* unto the image of the beast, that the image of the beast should both *speak* and cause that as many as would *not worship* the image of the beast should *be killed.* And he causeth all, both *small and great, rich and poor, free and bond,* to receive a characteristic mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads: and that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, either the *name* of the beast, or the *number* of his name." (Rev. 13).

§ 6. Is not this a wonderful coincidence, a mystery of ungodliness? Well may we say: *Without controversy*

great is the mystery of ungodliness! Where are the wise and the scribes who would say: All this certainly applies to the popedom (Roman church) but not to the Protestant church, for the latter went out from Babylon well-nigh 300 years ago and has returned from this captivity—?—Oh, how well you have hit the mark! Just go one step farther and measure with the same scale our modern times by the old and the present generation of Protestant Christendom, by the typical Jewish race that had returned from Babylon! True, it was *they* that rebuilt the temple in Jerusalem after its destruction and among whom, some centuries later, appeared the Light of the world, the Salvation of God; verily they never built more eagerly than just at that time—not only at the temple, but also at the graves of the old prophets whom their forefathers had killed; it was *they* who sent forth their missionaries who compassed sea and land to make here and there some heathen (Gentiles) Jews (proselytes) *after their own fashion, they* who thoroughly cleansed the *outside* of their cups and platters and their hands, and paid tithes even of mint and anise and cummin. But what kind of people were they *inwardly?* "Woe unto you, hypocrites," the Master said unto them "Woe unto you who have made the temple that was to be the house of prayer, a *den of thieves!* Woe unto you who make your proselytes twofold more the children of hell than yourselves! Woe unto you who strain at a gnat and swallow a camel; who in outwardly clean vessels keep exhortation and detestation (horror), who make a merit of giving tithes of mint and anise but have no regard for judgment, mercy or faith! Woe unto you who would say: If we had been in the days of our fathers we would not have been partakers with them in the blood of the prophets; we would have received them better and honored them as the messengers of

God." How wonderful! These same hypocrites had to fill up the measure of sin of their fathers by their rejection of the Son and His messengers! (Matt. 2, 3.)

And so it is with the generation of this our own time upon which has come the end of all things before Christ's second advent from heaven. All things recur. There is great eagerness to make some *proselytes* in the broad *heathen-world,* just as if the prince of darkness by a fictitious (disguised, or sham) turn would turn away our attention from the principal scene of his activity to make the people in Europe believe that with them the kingdom of God had already come and that the real seat of Satan's power was in the East and West Indies while he aims at the false (sham, or pretended) *Christendom.* But the heathens and ungodly sinners and hypocritical Christian Jews *at home* are suffered to remain as they are,—why they *are* already what they ought to be, they at least adorn themselves with the Christian name saying that they had been baptized and privileged to receive the communion—all this certain beyond doubt, by virtue of *parochial attestations* (or certificates)! There is a pedantic firm, nay a bigoted strict adherence to the old traditions of the established church, in conformity with the commandments of men and the precepts (or principles) of the world but not with Christ. There in real pharisaical manner they wash the outside of their platters and their hands *to satisfy the law;* whether they be full of extortion and excess, detestation and uncleanliness within is of little consequence; if only the *outside* is cleansed according to law and prescription then *all* is clean after this method (cf. Matt. 23, 26; Marc. 7, 3). Thus, for example, such hypocrites are not ashamed in the least to cry out into the world: A marriage which lacked the *consecration of the church* was declared a *concubinage* by

the law. But look around and see what sort of legitimate and holy marriages there are to be found in the world, which have received the consecration of the church and the parochial seal though they were neither contracted nor are they conducted *in the Lord!* Yet if they only are legitimate in form they are pure nevertheless! Which is regarded more here, that which is *outward* or that which lies *inward?* Do they cleanse that which is within the cup or the outside of it? But still, the scribes and pharisees from Jerusalem accuse the disciples of Christ, saying: Why do you transgress the *tradition of the elders?* for you wash not your hands when you eat bread. To them Christ's answer applies: Why do ye also transgress the *commandments of God?* For God has said, that every *divorce* (saving for the cause of fornication) is *adultery;* but you divorce husband and wife whenever you see fit; and have thus despised the commandment of God for the sake of your own traditions and rudiments (Matt. 15). They, too, build diligently at the temple and adorn the graves of the prophets, and erect monuments in memory of those who, in their times, were rejected for the sake of their testimony. Continue, ye builders, and fill up the measure of the sins of your fathers! No one is more qualified than you, hypocrites, to once more cut off Christ from His members, before He shall come in His glory to execute judgment upon you, and convince you of all the ungodly deeds which you, the ungodly, have committed; and of all the hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against Him. (Jude 15).

§ 7. What advantage, then, have the Protestants over the Roman Catholics? None whatever, for we have proved before that *they both are under the sin* and this is, in the sight of God, the essential thing. (Rom. 3, 9-21). The *confessional* difference between them or the kind of their

symbolic books is not the point of question here. The difference between the Jews and Gentiles and the advantage of the former over the latter in this respect was greater than it ever can be between the Protestants and the Roman Catholics: for unto the *Jews* alone the word and oracles of God were committed (Rom. 3, 1 ff); and this was their rejoicing already in the Old Testament: "He hath not dealt so with any nation: and as for His judgments they have not known them." (Deut. 4, 7-8; Psa. 147, 20). But in the light of the question: Are the Jews, because they have a higher and better *knowledge* of God, *more free from sin* than the Gentiles? the advantage of a higher knowledge fades away to such a degree that, (according to Rom. 2, 17) it rather becomes a disadvantage to the Jews, and that it weighs as a heavy, momentous stone in the balance of their weight and perdition, if that question is to be answered in the negative. This is indeed no commendation for or merit of the Protestants that they should enjoy credit before God, even if they did have a purer knowledge of God in their old *writings* and nevertheless *are equally under the sin:* this will only condemn them the more; for *writings* are no *persons,* neither are persons writings, unless we *have become an epistle of Christ,* known and read of all men as an *epistle of Christ,* prepared by the ministry of the New Testament, and *written* by faithful, enlightened, anointed, holy servants of Christ, written *not with ink* like parochial attestations but with the *spirit of the living God,* not in tables of stone like the old law that condemns, but in *fleshy tables of the heart* (2 Cor. 3, 2 ff; Heb. 8). If nothing is required but the having and possessing of the *mere word and letter* the Roman Catholics would be equally justified in saying to and against the Protestants: We have the *scriptures,* as the *word of God,* as well as you. And if, at least in the sight

of God, the word of God is *the only norm* by which to determine the truth, while *words of men* are *lies* (Rom. 3, 4): why do all these factions boast so of their dogmatic writings and standard books (or books of norms), in which they say they differ and still lay claim to the *self-same word of God,* gospel, faith, baptism, communion, etc. Why are they divided if they agree in these things? And again, why do they lay claim to the self-same gospel and nevertheless discriminate sharply between their confessions (creeds) and mutually anathematize one another: "Is Christ divided?" (1 Cor. 1).

§ 8. But no! In this our enlightened age people are no longer so intolerant as to condemn and stigmatize each other for principles (or arguments) of *faith,* as it happened in former times! From mere indifference or unconcern in such *subordinate* things, with which nothing can be gained or attained *in the world* at any rate (the privileged pastors or so-called divines are excepted!) yes, from a certain *concealed* (*secret*) *agreement and harmony of the minds in their unbelief,* the differing factions have now gone so far as to direct their efforts towards bringing about more *uniformity among themselves also in external things,* terming it merely a reconciliation of differences. (Concerning the *internal* there really is no difference among them, in so far as they *all* have sinned and come short of the glory of God). And even if they should not succeed in this, they are nevertheless all *united in their stand against Christ* who is the *truth* and to all who walk in the (path of) truth and give testimony of the truth. Herein the *mystery of ungodliness proves to be concordant* with all of them. For, champions of the Protestant doctrine and the Protestant church, pray tell me, what is there in the Roman Catholic church, *resembling* or corresponding to the mystery of ungodliness

(Rev. 13) that could not in a *similar form* be found in your church as well? And, we must allow, in this main point at least in which they all agree and of which the mystery of ungodliness really consists, *all with one accord,* adhere firmly and steadfastly in the old way: for the reformation has by no means abolished or remedied it according to the truth, on the contrary, it has established and strengthened it with all severity of the law, wherefore said reformation could in no wise fulfill its purpose "to establish a new godly generation, a new holy church." This is because the people brought their *old sinful hearts* and their old evil ways over into the New Jerusalem, while *outwardly* they appeared to return from Babylon. A true divine reformation is not brought about in such a manner that entire cities, countries and peoples should be converted; such is directly contrary to the gospel itself; for Christ foretold as certain that whenever *His word* was received in the hearts, *possessing them* and working (effecting) a *regeneration* in them, the enmity of the seed of the serpent would rise up against the children of light and of truth even in *individual households* (not to speak of *entire cities and countries*): "Three against two and two against three." (Matt. 10, 21-34 ff; Luc. 12, 49 ff; 1 Thes. 2, 13 ff). However, the spuriousness of said reformation was proved very soon. Scarcely before 10 or 12 years had passed, *also they that had gone out from Babylon,* in opposition to the word and the spirit of the Lord, took up *carnal* (*worldly*) *weapons* until the forces of both contending parties met in combat and shed streams of blood—presumably to vindicate the truth! Oh, this is not in conformity with the apostolic precept: "*The weapons of our warfare are not carnal,* but spiritual; we wrestle not against *flesh and blood,* but against the *rulers of darkness* of this world, against wicked spirits in high

places (2 Cor. 10; Eph. 6). Such arming with *carnal* weapons *on both sides* is not the fulfillment of that prophecy of the Lord: "Think not that I am come to send peace on earth: I am come not to send peace but *a sword.*" For even though the *carnal* avail themselves of *carnal* weapons, the spiritual children of God in the New Testament will not do so. They are called and appointed *to suffer* for the sake of the truth and righteousness and to take their sufferings quietly and patiently, without resistance, not avenging themselves or rendering evil for evil, because they know that vengeance is the Lord's and that they are called thereunto, that they should inherit *a blessing* (1 Pet. 2, 19 ff.; 3, 9 ff.; 1 Thes. 3, 3 f).

§ 9. We repeat our question: What is there in the Roman Catholic church *resembling* or corresponding to the mystery of ungodliness (according to Rev. 13) which could not in a similar form be found in the observance (rite, mode) of the *Protestant* church as well? In that chapter of Revelations we see *two* powers of darkness—both proceeding from *Satan,* step forth and join to carry out his last fierce wrath—in those that are lost because of their willing acceptance of seduction, and on Christ's faithful champions by their persecution and extermination, because they do not accept it. One of the powers of darkness is described as "a beast that rises up out of the *sea,*" and the other as "a beast that comes up out of the *earth.*" The scene of action of their united activity is to be looked for neither among the Jews, nor the Mohammedans, nor the Gentiles but in the so-called *Christendom.* Nor is there need of much searching in order to find it, since it can be seen by all who are not blind, it is as palpable as the Egyptian darkness. By name *Christian,* in form *ecclesiastic,* in appearance *worship,* in its essence *statutory constraint,* in its nature *satanic:* such

are the main features of the *image* made to the *beast,* which men with one accord worship! Consequently, whenever we find an institution, established and maintained by the co-operation of the state and the church, the two powers which otherwise are at variance with and in opposition to one another,—an institution *politic-ecclesiastical* or *ecclesiastic-political* in nature, and to which all, the small and the great, the rich and the poor, the free and the bond are *bound* by law and, in case of their resistance would be *forced* by law: there we have found the *mystery of ungodliness.* It is an *image of Christ and His church* and its *union* (Eph. 5, 25-32); however, it is not Christ and His church, but the image is made *to the beast* (Rev. 13, 14); and what is still more significant and remarkable, we do not read there, that the second beast himself had made the image, but that "he *causeth the earth and them that dwell therein*" to worship the first beast and *deceiveth them* to make an image (not "of" it but) "to" it, and to worship the image made *by their own hands,* and in the image, naturally, the *beast himself:* hence the bungling work of the hand of man, made upon the instigation and under the guidance of the false prophet and Satan! Just as the Israelites, 40 days after the law had solemnly been delivered (unto them) on Sinai, said to Aaron, the priest: "Up, make us Gods, which shall go before us; for as for this Moses, the man that brought us up out of the land of Egypt, we wot not what is become of him." And *all the people* brake off the golden earrings and brought them unto Aaron. And he received them at their hand, and *fashioned* it with a *graving tool* and *made a molten calf.* And they said, "*These be thy gods, O Israel, which brought thee up out of the land of Egypt.*" And when Aaron saw it, he built an *altar* before it; and Aaron made proclamation, and said, To-

morrow is a *feast to the Lord.* And they rose up early on the morrow, and *offered burnt offerings, and brought peace-offerings;* and the people sat down to eat and to drink, and rose to play (dance). (Ex. 32).

§ 10. Here we see the whole history: The people of Israel, having a few days before promised faithfulness to their God who, although invisible Himself, had visibly been revealed to them, could not abide with this God of the covenant, they demanded something *visible,* made a molten *image* and then imagined to have *the God* who had led them out of Egypt; and *by the name of the Lord* they brought the *image offerings* and made a feast. Herein we also see the new history of how the true Christianity became a false or nominal Christianity. By His death on the cross and His resurrection from the dead, Christ undoubtedly led His spiritual Israel out of the bondage of sin and devil, and He then sent His representative, the Spirit of Truth from heaven, under whose guidance the church of God in the earliest time became a holy and glorious bride of the Lamb. But as the time went on her followers were the longer the more drawn out from the Spirit down into the flesh, and out of the living truth which is godliness they made a human system, called the orthodox church doctrine, as if though they formed it with the graving tool of Aaron, the external forms of the preaching and the church, of baptism and communion remained, and many new ones were added, but the life in Christ had vanished; and still the deluded souls believed to possess *Christ* and to be His holy *church,* while they only had an image of Him and of His church. (I am not speaking now of the false doctrines and the controversies which were gradually introduced by the Gnostics, the Arians and the Pelagians and which were rejected also by the so-called orthodox church, but of the

so-called Catholic [General] church, of which even Augustin, at the beginning of the 5th century, lamented that the Levitical law had been more bearable than the divine service of the new Christian church). The most striking characteristic of this false Christianity is this, that it is *made by man:* for Christ is not made, but begotten by the Father and *born* from the days of eternity. Likewise, the true *children* of God are not made as men are made—Christians after an external mode; they, too, are *begotten* by God and *born* from above, out of the living word and Spirit, out of the Jerusalem above, not that below. (Gal. 4). Now, as little as the *molten image* of the Israelites was the *Lord God* who, with mighty hand, had led them out of Egypt, although they imagined this; just as little can the nominal Christians in the *image of Christ,* made by themselves, possess the living Christ and His deliverance from the bondage of sin; an image is no longer God who could have delivered us. And this is evident: the men who are *still in the sin,* as are the so-called Christians, are certainly *not* yet *redeemed* from the power of Satan, since an *image* could not possibly accomplish this.

This very same image of Christ and His church, however, is found in the form of the Protestant church as well as in that of the Roman Catholic, namely in the alliance (or union) between the state and the church with their characteristics: the *infant-baptism* where one receives the *name* and the *Egyptian mock-communion* (as Richter in his "Erklärte Hausbibel," p. 386, mentions the communion of the Egyptian-minded rationalistic Christendom) where one also professes the *number of the name* of the beast communion as well as the nuptial benediction: all under the form of the legalized *parochial certificates* which, according to contract, must be produced by every man, lest even his *civil*

subsistence be made impossible. Hence: one must adopt the sign of the kingdom of the beast, else he can not be a *subject of the state*—so closely have the two grown together. It is true beyond doubt and can not be denied that no one can trade or buy or sell any longer, unless he first give satisfactory information concerning himself, conformably to the legalized forms of the established church. What common interests have these two things, pray? And whence comes this marvelous harmony of all the parties herein? It is said that but for these religious forms and fetters, conditions in the world would be a great deal worse. But how could they be any worse than they actually are among the so-called Christians? Is there even a single vice that is not practiced among their number? Does not the word of the prophet to faithless Israel also apply to them: Go unto the heathen and ask and see whether the like is happening among them as among you! And why must just the *holy,* why must the seals of God's covenant in the New Testament which explicitly were instituted only for the obedient, faithful, voluntary, holy and beloved children of God, suffer such fearful abuse solely for the purpose of keeping unmanagable (unbridled) men and their licentious actions in check? Will you be able to justify this before God, you who claim to be administrators of His mysteries? Further, can there be anything more wretched and fraudulent than your method of making Christians? After the children have been baptized without their knowledge or consent *the law demands* that, when they have reached *the required age,* no matter how unwilling or ignorant they may be, all be put on the last in order to be entered upon the list of *communicants,* and at the same time upon the list of those who are *subject to military service,* the latter being as much the principal thing as the former is the subordinate.

And then they falsely say: "Well, our young people have become Christians by *their own choice.* They have made their profession of faith, or done their task (recited their part)." Show me the *faithful* (devout, believing) pastor in the established church who would dare to oppose such mischief, hireling's servitude and fraud! "Well, what is to be done? The law requires it so, because no one can become a citizen of the state who has not the mark of the beast." For this very reason no conscientious servant of Christ can any longer be a servant of the established church. Or should it be, that you have so little fear of the *word of God* and such great fear of the *word of man,* that you, in addition to your *own sins* unhesitatingly *become partakers of other men's sins?* (1 Tim. 5, 22). I know you say that the light of knowledge also shines for you; but do you also believe that God will reveal His sercet to you if you do not *fear* His word. Has not for such people as *your Christians* are, for such lawless and disobedient, for such ungodly, and sinners, unholy and profane, murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, manslayers, whoremongers and adulterers, for such that defile themselves with mankind, for manstealers, liars, perjured persons, for such that are lovers of their own selves, for the covetous, boasters, for the proud, the blasphemers, etc. (1 Tim. 1, 9-10; 2 Tim. 3, 1-2)—has not for such *the law* been made by God that they should be judged and condemned by it? But the gospel of Christ, His promises and the seals of His covenant are not for them, unless it be that they *turn* unto the Lord from the power of Satan who keeps them in captivity at his will: then the veil will be taken away also from them (their hearts). But they never think of doing this.

§ 11. Oh, that it were not in vain to warn the confident ("sicheren") people of our time: "Suffer no longer to be

deluded and seduced to take a lie for truth and the truth for a lie! But it seemingly is in vain. Are you perhaps waiting for still more palpable signs and proofs that that which you do is in itself the partaking in the mystery of ungodliness? Do you imagine that Satan would come and say: I am Satan, beware of me, for now is to be fulfilled what the word of prophecy has announced regarding the great seduction." Why are you so secure? Or do you believe that the great multitude of worshippers of the beast and the image made to him would think or admit that they are worshipping *the beast?* But mark this certain sign of the *spirit of falsehood* and seduction, *that no one in the world* contradicts *him:* for the world and Satan's spirit of lying are in harmony, understanding each other well (1 John 4, 1 ff; John 15, 18 ff; Luc. 6, 22 ff): "and the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself; therefore forgive them not" (Isa. 2, 9). But wherever the Spirit of *truth* shows itself there is no end of opposition (Acts 28, 22)—even therein will be a resemblance between the mystery of ungodliness: "Satan manifested in the flesh" and the mystery of godliness: "God was manifest in the flesh" also in this: As Christ *was here* on earth as the Light of the world, revealing the works of His father and scarcely any *knew* it was *He;* only a few elect (Marc. 8, 29) had *recognized* the Christ in Him: so the *antichrist* will be in the world and carry on his pernicious work; only few will know him as such, most men will unhesitatingly pay homage to him, because they readily take his kingdom for the true Christianity; for it is just this wherein the mystery of ungodliness consists, else it would indeed be an easy thing to escape from the danger. God punishes him who will not heed the prophecies of the scriptures by striking him blind, so he must become the victim of the lie, be-

cause he would not receive the truth by which he might be saved. (2 Thes. 2, 10-12). So it happened typically with the Jews, who in their own time did not recognize God's gracious visitation in the Redeemer that had been promised them, although they saw all prophecies of the old prophets literally fulfilled in Christ and themselves helped to fulfill them; but they did not understand or perceive it, because they were *hypocrites,* respecting *outward appearance* instead of the spirit and of the power of God that was revealed in Jesus; and as their punishment they have been groping in the darkness up to the present day, unable to find the *gate of faith,* again, and like a smoking flax, like a bruised reed they have been waiting until now for the *hope* of *Israel* and will continue to wait until God shall once more show His mercy unto them and "send forth their judgment unto victory," (Matt. 12, 20 f), until they all with one voice and shouts of joy shall greet the coming of the Deliverer, saying: "Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord, a king of Israel." (Matt. 23, 37-39; Rom. 11, 25 ff). "There shall come out of Sion the Deliverer, and shall turn away ungodliness from Jacob: For this is my covenant unto them, when I shall take away their sins." (Isa. 59, 20-21). So it has been decreed by God over *Israel* and promised to His chosen people. But God has not made the same covenant with the rest of the nations; the gospel of Christ is preached unto them and the door of faith is open to them only so long as Israel will remain obdurate, and when the time has come for Israel to be again received into the covenant of grace, then the time of grace and redemption for what is now called Christendom will also be fulfilled, the door of faith will then be closed and their judgment at hand (Luc. 13, 25 ff; Rev. 14, 6-12); then the despisers shall be despised and the mockers shall be

mocked. For you, the rebellious and false, no second day of redemption or re-establishment of the covenant remains as for Israel, but a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries, as has been prophesied for all who either did *not accept* the salvation *offered* unto them or did not *use* or *keep* the grace they have *received* (Heb. 6, 10. Epistle of Jude).

Hence, what happened *typically* to the people of Israel (for God has not rejected His chosen people for ever, but only until such time when the number of Gentiles entered shall be complete) will to its full extent (esp. Rom. 9) be fulfilled on the false Christendom, because the abomination of its (spiritual) harlotry is too great. The Jews fulfilled the sayings of the prophets concerning Christ and saw them fulfilled before their very eyes; and still they did not perceive it or believe it. Thus, for example, they could tell Herod from the scriptures just where Christ was to be born and what they said proved to be true, but they took offense at the outward appearance that they thought Jesus had gone forth from Nazareth in Galilee. In like manner the false Christians fulfill the prophecies concerning the mysteries of ungodliness; they live in the midst of the days of their fulfillment, they might see it with their eyes, if eyes they had to see, but they neither pay heed to the description thereof in the word of God nor to the signs of the time (Matt. 16, 1-4). The Jews rejected their Redeemer when He appeared in the flesh, lived among them, and by His works confirmed His having been sent from the Father: and were punished for their unbelief by being rejected themselves unto the present day. But the nominal Christians take no example in this Jewish people and seed of Abraham according to the flesh, who wander about them as a *sign and wonder* unto them; neither do they take

to heart the warning of the *apostle of the Gentiles* (Rom. 11): You, who were *called from among the Gentiles,* be not proud, do not become presumptuous, as were the Jews, because of their descendance from the fathers according to the flesh; do not imagine that you are safe, that things *must* be so; do not say in your hearts: But we have *become Christians* now and are grafted into the good olive-tree in place of the rejected Jews; but *be meek and fear;* God is not bound unto you (and this the apostle said to those who were still in the grace of God and brought forth the fruit of the kingdom, and not to the false Christians of our time who have *fallen away long ago* and on whom God's anger is *already accomplished*): for if God did not spare the natural branches who by their descent from the fathers of the covenant were offsprings of the blessed olive-tree, but cut them off because of their *unbelief:* how much less may He spare you! Therefore, mark both the kindness of God on the one hand and the cutting off on the other; that is—the *cutting off* in those who *have fallen, His kindness however in you, providing you remain in His mercy and grace, else you also will be cut off.*

Behold God's judgment on you, who found your glory as Christians upon your extraction after the flesh, birth and some wretched ceremonies, as for example, infant baptism, but who are not in the mercy and grace of God, however great your number is; should God spare you? Behold, he did not spare His chosen people because of their unbelief, when they rejected the Son as He appeared in the *flesh,* and should He spare *you* in your unbelief, nay, in your false Christianity and your worship of the beast and his image? Your iniquity is many times greater and more grievous than was the iniquity of the Jews, as many times greater as is a blasphemy against the *Holy Ghost* than a

blasphemy against the *Son of man.* Upon that sin of the Jews rested only a *temporal* punishment and rejection, but upon the sin of false Christians rests *eternal* punishment and rejection. But will it be of any benefit to you to be told of this? Will you be willing to accept it? But, nevertheless, you must know it; perhaps it will save at least a few from eternal destruction! Aye, I am certain that most of you will not believe it, but will either haughtily scorn and ridicule it or gnash your teeth at it. Know then that all who are *Christians by name* only (nominal Christians), who have not the *Spirit of Christ* and, consequently, do not live and walk in the spirit, but in the flesh, *in reality* reject *Christ* as their Redeemer, not merely in the manner in which the Jews rejected Him as He appeared *in the flesh,* (of which sin they could and can be healed, again, Rom. 11, 23; Matt. 12, 31-32) but in a manner much more fearful and of serious consequences do these so-called Christians deny and reject Him, namely, as He appeared *in the Spirit,* or so, as He by the Father was declared to be the Son of God and Saviour of the world, and justified as such with power according to the spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead. (Rom. 1, 4). There is no redemption for him who rejects Christ as He was manifested in the Spirit. And this it is that the Master said to His disciples before He returned to the Father again: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that believeth on me, the works that I do shall he also do; and greater works than these shall he do; *because I go unto my father."*

§ 13. From this we may infer as certain that Christ in His glory with the Father, that is, since He has been exalted to the right hand of the Father to be a Prince and a Saviour, is doing *greater* works than He did when He still was on earth. At that time He spoke of His works:

"Go and shew John again those things which ye do hear and see: The blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them." (Matt. 11, 4-5). But where are the greater works he could have done since then? Do not most people now think that Christ is doing no more works on earth, that He does not care for us any longer, that He is too far removed from the earth, that He once died for the sinners and that with this all is well with mankind? But mark: This is but the *first* part of the mystery of godliness: "The Son of God was manifest *in the flesh.*" These others, however, belong to it as well: "He was justified in the Spirit, seen of angels, preached unto the Gentiles, believed on in the world, received up in glory." Here the mystery of godliness becomes valid as a mystery of the *Trinity in God.* Even as the Father sent His *Son* into the world as His representative, as had been promised to the fathers, to take away the sin and to break Satan's power in the heirs of the promise: even so did the Son send His *spirit,* as His representative into the world as He had promised His disciples in order to give life from death and thus to seal justification in all who are sanctified; and as the *Son* had come to glorify the Father, so the *Spirit* of truth comes to glorify the Son.

Who does not like this mystery of godliness, let him reject it, but he who does reject it (not only as a *doctrine of the church* but as the *way to godliness and glorification*) must, he cannot help it, whether he be willing or unwilling, whether he believe it or not, accept *another mystery* of the Trinity which is the essence of the mystery of *ungodliness;* likewise, not as mere doctrine, but as a fact, as *the way to ungodliness* and to damnation. For as there is a *divine Trinity* (or Trinity in God) so there is also a *devilish*

Trinity (or Trinity in the devil). And as in the former there is *the father,* who sent the Son into the world, and *the word,* that brings us back again to the Father, and the *Holy Ghost,* who renews us to the image of God, so in the mystery of ungodliness, in this devilish Trinity, there is (1) *the dragon,* Satan, who gives to the beast his own seat and his power and great authority; (2) *the beast,* who uses the power received to make men subject unto the dragon and lead them to him; and (3) *the false prophet* who makes an image to the beast and deceives them to worship it as God. (Rev. 16, 13). And these *three* are *one,* and *go* and *lead* into *damnation!* Do not believe that it is a matter of indifference for a man whether or not he accept the mystery of godliness, or of the Trinity in God. For we can receive the *Son* only through the *Spirit* and in the Son alone may we come to the *Father* and attain salvation. However, *receiving* the Holy Ghost is not such an easy matter. Man is much more likely to commit the sin of *rejecting* and *blaspheming* Him than to attain the grace of receiving Him. Whosoever does not repent his sins, and in his ungodliness refuses to believe that Christ has died for our sins and was raised again for our justification,—from which belief must spring our *baptism into the death of Christ* as being our *burial with Christ,* as an evidence that through our faith our old man has *indeed first died* with Him in order to be resurrected with Him into the newness of life (Rom. 6)—in short, whosoever does not accept the *word* of testimony concerning Christ, cannot receive the Spirit of promise, neither can Christ be justified in him through the Spirit; he is and remains a sinner and a servant of sin and as such is a child of wrath and damnation. (Acts 2, 38-41; John 14, 17; Mark 16, 15).

Now, since there is no other way of receiving Christ in

this world except through His representative, the Holy Ghost, all who cannot receive this Spirit of sanctification because of their unbelief do not only in reality reject Christ, even though they seem to acknowledge Him according to the letter, they are also in a condition to blaspheme the self-same Holy Spirit of God. For even as the pharisees fell into this sin when they defamed the works of Christ, calling them works of Satan, just so, and even more, do in our own times all those fall into the self-same sin who defame and, what is still more, ascribe to Satan as to God, the *far greater works* of Christ which He is doing from the glory with the Father, through His representative on earth. They blaspheme the *spirit of Christ* in His witnesses of the truth and His *works* in those who through their (*i. e.,* the witnesses') words have become faithful unto Him and converted from the darkness into His marvelous light. As the *soul* is of far greater moment than the *body,* so are the works of Christ which through His word of grace and His spirit of glory He *now* does unto those who receive Him, greater than all the works He did when He lived on earth unto those that were physically ill. They all are enlightened by Christ and arise from the dead, that is from the death in which the world lies buried and in which it ripens without repentance and belief to meet the day of judgment and eternal death. But what has righteousness in common with unrighteousness, or light with darkness, and what concord has Christ with Belial? or what part has he that believes, with an infidel, and what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For those in whom the spirit of Christ dwells are the temple of the living God, and by their heavenly calling are bound to go out from (among) the idolaters and cleanse themselves from the vessels of dishonor and wrath, which on the day of the wrath of God

shall be broken to shivers as the vessels of a potter. *Esau* (Edom), as contrasted with the blessed *Israel,*—in the Old Testament the pretender to the blessing of the birthright, but rejected as a fornicator and profane person, is the type of the false Christianity in the New Testament, which sells and forfeits its birthright in heaven for the red pottage of earthly pleasure and honor, and in return receives a bloody red judgment for its fornication and ungodliness. (2 Cor. 6, 14 ff; 2 Tim. 2, 19 ff; Rom. 9; Heb. 12; Isa. 63; Rev. 2, 22 ff; 19, 11 ff).

§ 14. "Now will I sing to my well beloved a song of my beloved, touching his vineyard" (Isa. 5, 1 ff). There was in olden times a small people, who in their innocence grazed their herds on the mountains, content and happy and enjoying their freedom, until in the neighboring country a new king came to the throne, who did not care for the welfare of the *country* of which the happy people formed a part, but who only strove to increase his *own dynastic power.* And doing this he stretched his greedy and imperious hands out over the small people also, robbed them of their freedom and in the harsh constraint of servitude, brought them under the staff of ruthless governors. In vain the children of the mountains sent their messengers to the king begging for their former freedom; with harsh words they were turned away and told they should keep silence and continue to serve. For a long hard time the helpless herdsmen bore the yoke of bondage, groaning under its weight. But the governors, in the name of their ruler, carried violence and wrong farther and farther. At last the yoke became too heavy. Three men united in secret (and resolved) to break it; and they did break it and the herdsmen were free again as before.

No doubt you were glad to hear "the song of the vine-

yard of my beloved," you inhabitants of Switzerland, filled with love and pride of liberty! For which of you would condemn as *rebels and deserters* those founders of the Swiss confederacy and authors of their established freedom, because they would no longer be *in bondage* to the Dukes of Austria? Were they really *deserters?* The Duke of Austria and his governors, of course, thought they were and for many years waged war against them, hoping soon to bring the *rebellious peasants* in the Forest cantons to reason. But they were no deserters, they fought and thus gained their *liberty* that they might *remain* with the German empire to which they rightfully belonged. It was not their desire to be without a chief or without an *alliance,* only they would not serve a foreign *lord.* They were unanimous in this that they must join themselves either to the German empire or to Austria. Hence, they renounced *Austria* that they might not fall off from the *empire!*

And now, inhabitants of free Switzerland, judge between your *sentiments* and your *actions.* Why do you claim to be liberty-loving in your sentiments while in your actions you are the oppressors of liberty? I am not speaking of your political freedom now, but of the true spiritual freedom of the children of God which Christ gives to His believers and saints, and of which no visible or invisible power or creature, neither angel nor principality nor power, neither height nor depth, neither life nor death can rob them, namely those whom Christ has actually freed from the abominable bondage of sin and the Devil. But mark it well: We do not in the least complain of the *external* oppression and suffering which we are made to bear for the name of Christ; we rather rejoice in this sign of the living Christ within us that we, for His sake, are counted as sheep for the slaughter. But we must tell you that we will not and must not be

robbed of the liberty wherewith Christ has made us free, by the sufferings of this present time. Just continue to do what you must, this does not grieve us for our sake but for the sake of you who are servants of corruption, while you boast of your carnal liberty. You imagine that Satan, the prince of darkness in this world is still carrying on his work in heathen lands perhaps, but no longer among you! Indeed, he is still active also there, but his *chief work* is with you. He only does what by his nature he cannot help doing, as he has done from the beginning. He is an enemy of *all men,* even those who serve him and through this service will be cast into perdition; but still he chiefly is the *adversary* of Christ and those that belong to Him and serve Him out of a pure heart and a good conscience. Against them he breathes out threatening and slaughter. From the beginning of the gospel *Christ,* through His Holy Spirit, was the *only Lord* of His church. Afterwards *Satan* came in unawares and changed the church of God into a *synagogue of Satan;* and all was enslaved to him under the semblance and the name of Christ. And therefore, as the Swiss said: we will not belong to the *house of Austria* and *become her bondsmen,* but will join the *German Empire* and *remain free;* so we say: we renounce, not the *church of Christ* but the false anti-Christian kingdom; we separate ourselves, not from the *true Lord,* but from the false illegitimate usurper! Yes, we do not only not part from the church of Christ, but *in order not to be parted from it* we *sever our connection with the established church* and suffer for this with joy; as the Swiss said: we will remain with the empire and therefore will not belong to Austria. Well, this the Swiss understand and praise; but the *truth in Christ,* which gives us *true freedom,* they will not understand or praise!

§ 15. What, then, is the *established church* which we must renounce in order to belong to the true church of God which is *above?* It is a collection or congregation of kindreds, tongues and nations under the name of Christ, which the word of prophecy likens unto a *gathering together of many waters* upon which sits the whore. (Rev. 17, 1-15). And as God in the beginning of the creation called the gathering together of the waters the "Seas," so this collection of many and great nations is likewise called *a sea* out of which the *beast* rose up to rule over them. Of this alliance of nations—Christian by name—the multitude constitute the *shell* and the teachers or preachers therein the *nucleus.* For the sake of a sharper distinction between and separation of the two the expressions *clergy* and *laity* (or clergymen and laymen) were early introduced. The term *laity,* for those who constitute the shell, embraces the *multitude* of the *common people* who are *ignorant and babes* in matters *spiritual,* as the rulers of the Jews said in those days when the name of Christ had not yet become a title of honor: "Have any of the *rulers* or the *pharisees* believed on him? But these (common) *people* who knoweth not the law are cursed." (John 7, 47-49). The so-called *clergy,* on the other hand, who constitute the *nucleus* of the established church are the *learned* men and *scholars.* But how corrupt is this nucleus! Christ's allegoric words which show the difference between the carnal unconverted and the spiritual converted man in general: "The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be single, thy whole body shall be full of light. But if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness. If therefore the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!" These words of Christ must also be applied to the body of the established church. So we may say: If the light in you is

darkness, if your teachers and leaders are blind and seducers, if your clergymen are carnal and worldly, if the nucleus is corrupt: how terrible must be the condition of the whole body, how great the darkness and corruption of the multitude.

§ 16. We must now enter into the meaning of the two terms *clergy* and *laity* more deeply that those who do not understand their significance may not think that we are going too far in the matter. Originally, and according to the scriptures, the term *spiritual* man (or elected) in contradistinction to the carnal unconverted (not elected) man in the *world* was common to *all Christians without exception* or distinction, *i. e.,* to all who were born again (regenerated) of water and of the Spirit, to all those saved and sanctified in Christ (1 Cor. 2; 1 Pet. 2; Heb. 2); they *all* had received the *unction* from the *Holy One* (1 John 2); there was no distinct caste in the church of God which was peculiarly or, more than that, exclusively *spiritual* or called the "clergy." Without the Spirit of Christ, the Spirit of promise, *none* could belong *to Christ,* nor, consequently, to His church which is the body of Christ (1 Cor. 12, 12-13). It was their glory before God in Christ that they had become spiritual men from carnal, light from darkness, servants of righteousness from servants of sin. (Rom. 6; 1 Pet. 2, 24-25). It would sooner be possible that fire should not burn or that light should be darkness, than that a man should be a *Christian* and child of God without the regeneration and sanctification of the spirit. (Tit. 3, 3 ff). However, what is *impossible before God* was afterwards deemed possible by men, and the term *"clergy"* (or spiritual) became prevalent but was restricted to a certain class within the church, while all others, notwithstanding that

they still were to be considered *Christians,* collectively came to be known by that ignominious base term *laity,* in *contradistinction* to the clergy (or spiritual body). With that it was formally acknowledged and pronounced that the "new creature" did not constitute the *essence* of a Christian. (2 Cor. 5; Gal. 5, 6). But from that time on the external church had likewise ceased to be a church of God and a body of Christ; it became the whore of the state from which its servants accepted pay and laws. It is difficult to say which is more ignominious: the fact that men began to confer the title of *"the clergy"* to a certain class, or the fact that they accepted this title for themselves and for the rest, known as the "laity," confirmed the notion that one may be a Christian *without* being *spiritual* or *holy.* But how could they *rule* over the people without this distinction? They, too, could say: "Jacta est alea"—the die is cast, and the war against Christ and his kingdom is declared! For when the disciples betrayed a spirit of ambition and a desire for some spiritual rank by their question which of them should be accounted the greatest (Luc. 22, 24 ff), the Master said to them: "The kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and they that exercise authority upon them are given titles of honor; *but ye shall not be so:* but he that is greatest among you, let him be as the younger; and he that is chief, as he that doth serve. For whether is greater, he that sitteth at meat, or he that serveth? Is not he that sitteth at meat? But I am among you as he that serveth." Oh, how far remote from this spirit of Christ is the so-called *clergy,* or spiritual body, who fancy so much to be called Reverend and Right Reverend and even gracious Lords! What should never have happened in the Christian church that happened so soon;—yet no, not in the *church of Christ* but in the *established church,* and there, of course, it is allowed: for *it* does not care for the word and will of the Lord, so He

does not care for it but has dealt with it as He had once dealt with faithless Israel (Acts 7, 38-43) and delivered it over into captivity in Babylon. In the world all worldly things are free and frank. He who does not like this meek and humble spirit of Christ may join with the world, where he will find ample latitude to satisfy his worldly desires. Even in the early times of the church there arose a strife as to which of four should have the precedence, until at last, one made himself master. But that *in the world* (though not in the church of God), titles of honor, dominion and worldly conduct are allowed, until with Christ's Advent all this will be abolished He says Himself in the passage which we have cited above. Do you not yet know whether the established church be the *world* or the church of God? The clergy are *masters* and rule in their office and call the rest simply the laity; and with proud self-reliance which their knowledge imparts to them they say: "Should tailors, cobblers and other common unlearned people understand the Bible as well as one of us? (1 Pet. 5, 1 ff).

§ 17. Now, as to the term "*laity*" itself it is related, both in form and import, to the mystic word *nicolaitanes* (Rev. 2, 6, 14, 15), which in Greek signifies the same as the Hebrew *Bileamites* and in German means ruler, corrupter, seducer of the people, as it really has been fulfilled in the spiritual sway of the clergy. The real corruption of the people consists in this, that through the traditional doctrine of the church they are kept under the delusion of their being *Christians* notwithstanding all their sins if only they abide by the forms prescribed by the church, such as infant baptism, confirmation, nuptial benediction, etc. Could the poor people more wretchedly be tricked out of their salvation? Does the kingdom of God consist in some external figures (ceremonies), or in our redemption from the power of darkness and the bondage of sin and in the restoration of

the image of God which through the sin of man was lost? That the so-called (intellectual) *enlightenment and emancipation of the people* which is so highly lauded in our days should redress corruption is so far from being true, that it rather brought the completion of the mystery of ungodliness. This is only *the reverse of the Nicolaitanes!* This enlightenment is just the opposite of the *divine enlightenment* of which we become partakers through our faith in the Son of God as He appeared in the flesh and the anointing of His spirit, as is written: Ye were sometimes darkness as servants of sin, but now are ye light in the Lord as servants of the Lord and of righteousness: Walk now as children of light! For the fruit of the Spirit is in all goodness and righteousness and truth. (Eph. 5; Rom. 6). The *emancipation* of the children of God of which the Apostle Paul speaks, (Gal. 4, 12) does *not* consist therein that, for example, the people are given the right in the election of a preacher to cast their vote after hearing probation sermons; this is rather the fulfillment of the prediction of the same apostle, concerning the latter times: that the people will not endure the sound doctrine of the gospel, but after their own lusts chose their teachers, having itching ears; and that they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables (2 Tim. 4, 3-4), *i. e.,* to the traditional statutes of the church doctrine and other falsehoods and follies. But the true emancipation of the children of God is this—that they be delivered from and dead to the rudiments of (the religion of) the world and that God instead send forth the Spirit of His Son into their hearts, crying, Abba, Father! If this change has taken place within you, then you are no longer a servant of sin under the legalized form of the self-chosen worship of the world, but a son, and if a son then also an heir of God through Christ. In this rudimental religion of the world (Gal. 4; Col. 2), the apostle also includes the con-

fining of divine service to certain days which man in his unconverted state makes his god, believing that with this the rest of the days are left open to the service of Satan and sin! But what would the apostles say if they first could see the baptism of children, confirmation, church communion service and the like which is said to have been obtained from them! But through the Spirit they could foresee it and they announced that the corruption would come; it is for us now to heed their predictions that we may not be damned with the world, but through patience and comfort in the scriptures might have hope (Rom. 15, 3-4).

§ 18. In this age therefore, a true, perfect conversion comprises one essential mark and requisite more than was the case even in the earliest time of the gospel. It must not only be a conversion from the fall of Adam and the misery of sin of man's old nature, but furthermore a disenchantment from the sorceries of the great whore, a *recovery* from these snares of the devil and the wine of wrath of Babylon's fornication which she made *drink* all nations (2 Tim. 2, 25-26; Rev. 14, 8-10; 17, 2). From their youth, nay, from their baptism in their infancy, men are emerged, initiated in the mystery of ungodliness, and given to drink from the cup of poison and intoxication of the great whore. Verily, this is a *more dreadful* poison and corruption, more injurious and permeating than even our fall and wretchedness in Adam; furthermore, none can be helped out of this second poison and fall where *repentance* of the sins of the *old nature* in Adam *only* is preached; a pure faith in Christ with an upright cleaving to Him is entirely inconsistent with being joined to the whore. For here again the word of the apostle applies, "He which is joined to an *harlot* is *one body;* but he that is joined unto the *Lord* is *one spirit.*" But just as Peter indeed possessed divine enlightenment when he knew and confessed that Jesus was the Christ and the Son

of God, while he nevertheless in another essential point resisted the truth and the way of God that the same Christ and Son of God through the sufferings of death should be crowned with glory and honor and become the author of eternal salvation unto all that obey Him: so there are many now who still concede that man by nature is a sinner, fallen in Adam and lost and therefore stands in need of the help of God to be restored again and saved, and yet in that other essential point they resist the truth and the way of God—that renouncing the whore and partaking of the suffering of Christ are requisites for a perfect union with Christ. "Ought not Christ to have suffered these things, and to enter into His glory?" He said to His followers who were yet without understanding and hard of belief. And their followers of the present time believe that they may and must become like Him in His glory but not so in His sufferings. Therefore they keep good friendship with the world and know not that this is fornication and enmity with God. (James 4).

To be sure, we read that the apostles made one further requisite to a perfect conversion and redemption unto salvation than simply a repentance of the corruption of the old nature in general, as it has come upon us through the fall of Adam. The *Jews* were *not only* admonished: *"Repent* and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost: For the promise is unto you and your children, and to all that are far off (concerning place, time, and inner condition), even as many as the Lord our God shall call." But with many *other* words did he testify and exhort, saying, "Save yourselves *from this untoward generation!"* Then they that gladly received his word were baptized. (Acts 2, 38-41). Again, to the *Gentiles* the apostle did not only write, "God be thanked that ye *were the serv-*

ants of sin, but ye have obeyed from the heart that form of the doctrine which was delivered you" (Rom. 6); but also, "Ye know that ye were Gentiles, carried away to these *dumb idols,* even as ye were led;" (that is) then when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods. But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage? (1 Cor. 12, 2; Gal. 4, 8-9; 1 Thes. 1, 9).

Hence, what the apostle demanded of the Jews and the Gentiles who would join the church of God was not only a turning away from the sins of life but particularly a separation from the sin of a false worship and an ungodly communion: for how could they have been considered true converted children of His kingdom, if they had continued to take part in all this in order to keep on good terms (as it is called) with the unbelievers. But with a true, complete conversion such false peace with the world will come to an end by itself, as the apostle again says, "Since the word of God has effectually worked in you that *believe* and you became followers of the church of God which in Judaea are in Christ Jesus, ye, also have suffered *like* things of *your countrymen,* even as they have of the Jews. And when we were with you we told you before that ye should suffer tribulation; even as it came to pass, and ye know." (1 Thes. 2, 13-14; 3, 3-4; Phill. 3).

§ 19. But more wicked and injurious and more hostile to the truth than either Judaism, bound to its carnal commandments, or heathenism with its worship of idols, is *the false Christianity* whose poison we have imbibed from the days of our childhood, a poison that has made these nations *drunk* who look upon themselves as the Christian church; for there the people imagine to be what they are not and to possess what they after all do not possess. The reeling and

giddiness, stupor and lethargy, vomiting and stammering, raging and raving of the false Christians (Isa. 27, 7-8) can be explained only from this *drunkenness* from the cup of wrath of the great whore. To be converted and *recovered* from this drunkenness is more difficult for us and more important too, than our repentance from the fall of Adam. Who in our times attains only to a knowledge of his natural sin and corruption (which, alas, is the case with only few), but fails to see and comprehend his being enchanted by the cup of wrath of the great whore can not be disenchanted and in truth restored in Christ; he rather is in this condition still *under the law* (which condemns), wherein the fight with sin can never become *decisive* or terminate in a *victory of grace* and righteousness of life in Christ. Such people will ever lament sin and perhaps maintain that a Christian *must* remain under it his whole lifetime; and what was *impossible with the law* is by them considered *impossible with Christ,* because they never have experienced His power. (Rom. 7-8). Oh, you languid Christians, when *will* you learn how you are to be healed, that you may take straight, even steps and not fall on the path of life (Heb. 12, 13; 2 Pet. 1, 3-9). The Christianity of your imagination is not that of the word and the church of God. You are wavering because you do not know whether *Baal* be God or the *Lord.* If you were once decided in this, your halting and falling would soon leave you and you would no longer find it necessary to make crutches and pillows (for yourself) from the word of God. Why should it not be equally necessary for you to turn away from your false Christianity, as it was for the believing Jews to turn from hypocritical Judaism and for the converted Gentiles to turn from heathenism and its idolatry? Just as one who has taken poison can be rescued from its deadly effects only by means of an antidote which will eject the poison, so must

the poison of the whore which we have imbibed be driven out again, that we may recover from the drunkenness of her cup of trembling. If the knowledge of our fall in Adam is the first mark of our conversion, the recovery from that other greater corruption is the second mark: not until then can we, on the contrary, be made to drink from the same Holy Spirit of promise (1 Cor. 12, 12-13) and be abundantly satisfied with the fatness of the house and given drink from the river of His pleasures (Psa. 36, 8), that even from our bodies shall flow rivers of living water (John 7, 37-39; 4, 14).

And what is upon the whole the difference between the *wise* and the *foolish* virgins? Only the *vessels filled* with oil—the unction of the Spirit! The light of knowledge, according to the church doctrine, merely of the fall of Adam, etc., will no longer suffice where the separation from the false Christianity is much more important, else the foolish virgins would not be disappointed! This is the reason that at the present time there exists a certain tension and a barrier between the followers of the doctrine of the church and those who have renounced the false church with its doctrine, although both classes seem to strive toward the same goal: to meet the bridegroom. Surely the church doctrine would do well enough if we had to deal with Adam only and if Satan had not established a false church from which we must be freed just as well as from our natural impotence in Adam and under the law. Of course, if one should have to find his salvation in a mere separation from the established church without beginning with his redemption from the fall of Adam, as was so frequently done at the time of the reformation, he would gain his object as little as another man who would be converted only from the fall of Adam but not at the same time from Babylon's fornication. You think to gain your end, of course, but you do

not yet know what fine (*i. e.,* crafty) people these foolish virgins are!

§ 20. We must now speak of another great error to which many are captivated, and which especially works upon them so that they do not recognize the mystery of ungodliness, *"Satan was manifest in the flesh,"* and even take it for the very mystery of godliness: *God was manifest in the flesh.* It is the same delusion under which the people labored even at the time of Christ—and not the lowliest and meanest of them, but those of the better type and the best who were most willing to hear the word; and if only the people of the present time would heed this sign, the veil might be taken away from them with the help and grace of God, that they could see whether the *established* church is the church of Christ or its opposite, *the great Babylon* of which the word of prophecy speaks, and learn therefrom whether or not they must be converted from this great whore, so as not to become partakers of her sins and punishments. It is the delusion, that the kingdom of God and Christ on earth, that was expected (or looked forward to) in the Old Testament *had come* with His *first* appearance in the flesh, and that the great established church was nothing less than the product of His coming—the victory of Christianity over many and great nations, kindreds, tongues and kingdoms. Indeed, they believe that by the Roman emperor Constantine's becoming a Christian and establishing the Christian faith as the religion of the empire, the church had really entered into the possession of the land of *Canaan,* while in the three preceding centuries of persecution it had been made to lead a nomadic life in the wilderness and under tents. Permanent places of abode they certainly had acquired then, abodes so permanent that in their possession of them the Christians entirely forgot that they were only strangers and pilgrims on this earth; but on the other hand

the old *Canaanitish nature* of the former heathen inhabitants of the land became the more prominent instead. On this idle (or vain) foundation rested, for example, all the great acquisitions and conquests which were made in the middle ages, presumably in the interest of the Christian church (lit. "to be delivered into the hands of the Christian church"), when entire Gentile nations were converted to the Christian faith by being given their choice of either *baptism* or the *sword.* And even where the Gentiles were dealt with in a more gentle and mild manner, it was considered sufficient if they had been made obedient to the *papal see.* The people thought that with this their salvation was infallibly insured to them, just as houses and other properties are now insured through insurance companies. And has it been any different up to the present day, when millions of people will live and die by the conviction that the Roman Catholic church is the *only saving* church (or the church that has the sole disposal of the means of grace)? —that is, that one needs only to be a member of this church in order to be surely saved. (Thus it is in the *doctrine* or theory at least, while in *reality* and in life things are, of course, entirely different; for then when one is on the point of *death* he does not know from fear of the judgment that is to follow whither to turn with his poor soul that knows (has) no redemption and no redeemer, and has prayers offered everywhere, that his life might be extended!) And though other millions of people deny this claim of the Roman Catholic church to be the *only* saving one, what does it help? They, in return, consider *their own* church or their belonging to it sufficient to secure their salvation, and there is no *end* to *deceit.* "Therefore thou hast forsaken them, because they be replenished from the east, and are soothsayers like the Philistines, and they please themselves in the children of strangers. Their land is also full

of silver and gold, neither is there any end of their treasures; their land is also full of horses, neither is there any end of their chariots: Their land also is full of idols; they worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made: And the mean man boweth down, and the great man humbleth himself: therefore forgive them not. Enter into the rock, and hide thee in the dust, for fear of the Lord, and for the glory of his majesty. The lofty looks of man shall be humbled, and the haughtiness of men shall be bowed down, and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. For the day of the Lord of hosts shall be upon every one that is proud and haughty and upon every one that is lifted up, and he shall be brought low." (Isa. 2, 6-12.)

§ 21. If the Christian nations did not think that the *kingdom of God* had *already come,* but if they would acknowledge that it is *still to come,* they would not mistake the *established church* for it, but would, with all their hearts, turn away from their *idolatry* unto God and then join in the prayer, "*Thy* kingdom come," after having themselves received the first-fruits thereof.

Of course, it does not appear that they now bend their knees to *"dumb idols,"* as the heathens do, but what does the word of prophecy say? "And he (*i. e.,* the false prophet) hath power to give life unto the *image* of the beast that the *image* of the beast *should speak."* (Rev. 13, 15.)

No, the people of Europe do not worship *dumb idols,* they are too much enlightened to do that; but an image which has the gift of *speech* appears all the more *wonderful* to them and all the more worthy of worship. But alas, it has received its life (spirit) from the *beast* and not from *God!* And for this reason it is still *idolatry,* and not worship of God; and the more *subtle* it appears the *grosser* it is and the more captivating; and those that would put no faith in

the *miracles of God,* no matter how many He has worked and is still working, are the more infatuated with the miracle of *lie,* and as a punishment for their unbelief toward God, must believe it. Moreover the great seduction is bent, not upon the worship of the *beast* himself, but rather upon the worship of its *image,* for all who worship the image, gifted with speech and life (spirit) are certainly doing that honor unto the master-builder: Satan, just as the heathens, knowingly or unknowingly, are doing the same thing, as Paul, the apostle says: "What say I then? that the idol is anything, or that, which is offered in sacrifice to idols is anything? But I say that the things which the Gentiles sacrifice, they sacrifice to *demons,* and not to God, and I would not that ye should have fellowship with *devils.* Ye cannot drink the cup of the Lord and the cup of devils: ye cannot be partakers of the Lord's table and of the table of devils." (1 Cor. 10, 19-21). Now, this is especially the case in the worship of the beast or his image, the false Christianity; and what kind of *evil spirits* animate this *image,* giving it *life* (spirits) and *speech,* we read in particular in 1 Tim. 4, ff; Rev. 16, 13 ff. The certainly marvelous concord of so many and such great nations in the mystery of ungodliness can be explained only by an influence coming from the *spirit-realm,* the realm of *darkness,* for usually it is said of men, *"So many men, so many opinions;"* but although the beast has *many heads,* they are, nevertheless, all of the *same mind* and opinion and carry out the same intention. It is *"unity* in plurality," that they have in view, and therefore one and the same spirit must operate. As the *Holy Spirit of God* works the same mind and the same judgment in all who are *sanctified* in Him, so the *spirit of the world* works the same in the *ungodly,* who through it will be plunged into destruction.

§ 22. And what does the prophecy say concerning the

conditions in the world as they will exist just before the coming of the great and terrible day of the Lord and the *visible* kingdom of Christ and God? Let us hear the answer thereto. When the Lord, in the days of His flesh, abided at the house of a *sinner* and the publican *Zacchaeus* in return received the Lord and his salvation with joy; when all the self-righteous murmured and attempted to spoil the joy for both, Him who brought salvation and Him who had received it, Jesus said: "This day is salvation come to this house, forsomuch as he also is a son of Abraham. For the Son of man is come *to seek and to save that which was lost.*" (Luc. 19, 9-10). Herein we have the great theme of the entire gospel which is to be preached to every creature, that all who receive the word of salvation as Zacchaeus received it, may not be lost but receive life everlasting. Salvation is designed for *those who are lost,* and so its message is sent unto *those who are lost.* Now it is true that we are *all lost* in Adam, but the multitude will not believe it, how then should they be *converted* and, like Zacchaeus, joyfully receive Christ and His salvation? However salvation in Christ does not consist, as men would like to have it, in clothing oneself (lit. "in" placing oneself, "or" resting at ease) in His righteousness imputed to us and then remaining in sin; we do not find this in Zacchaeus either, but salvation is a resurrection from the death of Adam in Christ, a new godly life with the risen Christ, a walking in the Spirit. From this we may see that for *most men* the whole gospel-dispensation is established *in vain, frustrated* in its entire process and purpose! They see the purpose of Christ's appearance in the flesh in establishing a new religion or form of divine worship in the world like Moses and Mohammed established them, but not in *seeking and saving that which was lost,* in redeeming the sinful children of men from the tyrannic power of Satan; and

in their form of worship they continue to live in sin as before; they can not be *saved* but are *lost* and remain *lost.* Jesus foresaw this erring course, and therefore He continued (Luc. 19, 11 ff.) "and spake a *parable,* because He was nigh to Jerusalem, and because *they thought that the kingdom of God should immediately appear.*" To dispel this *false* notion of His followers concerning His *first* advent in the flesh, he told the parable which we will now discuss (to some extent). Let those that believe that the kingdom of God has already appeared and that it is in the established church, mark what the *Lord* says about it.

§ 23. Verse 12 (Lucas 19). "A certain nobleman went into a far country to receive for himself a kingdom, and to return." This, we see, is said against the belief of those who expected an *immediate* manifestation of the kingdom of God when the Son had appeared in the flesh. They were not unbelievers or scorners as were those who asked Him when the kingdom of God should come (Luc. 17, 20); on the contrary, they were people who believed that He was the promised Messiah; the answer, however, is about the same in both instances. Now, if the purpose of His first sending had been to *visibly* reveal the kingdom of God on earth, this would have been the proper time for the fulfillment of this expectation, because now *the Son of God had appeared Himself,* and so did all believers of that time, even His immediate disciples themselves, really understand His coming; for even at that moment when He was about to depart from them to heaven, they asked Him: "Lord wilt thou at *this time* restore again the kingdom to Israel?" But He said unto them, "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons which the Father has put in His own power. But ye shall receive power after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you, and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem

and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the world." (Acts 1, 6-8; Luc. 24, 47-49). In like manner in the parable before us, He says with regard to the belief that the kingdom of God would even then be manifested, "Not so, first must the high-born nobleman go into *a far country* to receive a kingdom and to return *a long time after.*" And after He had entered into His glory and in testimony thereof had sent His spirit of promise upon His disciples, they also understood the mystery; and thenceforth the theme of all their preaching in the world was, that He must reign in the kingdom of heaven at the right hand of (the power of) God, as the king of kings and Lord of all lords, until the time appointed by the Father for the restitution of all things, which God hath spoken by the mouth of all His holy prophets since the world began. (Acts 3, 19-21; 17, 30-31; Eph. 1, 20-21; 1 Pet. 3, 22, etc.). To Him as the *Son of man,* the exalted and the *first-born* from the dead, the Father has given all power and authority in heaven and on earth. The kingdom which He, as the *only begotten Son* has had from the Father from all eternity, and had left for the short time of His voluntary humiliation as the servant of God to purchase a holy congregation and glorify the new generation in Himself, *this same kingdom* he has received again as the *Son of man,* and henceforth waits at the right hand of the Father until the Father shall have made His enemies His footstool. (Heb. 1-2; Eph. 5; 1 Cor. 15, etc.). The first thing we must learn and remember is therefore: that *the kingdom of Christ* up to this hour is *not on earth* but *in heaven;* for He is sojourning in heaven to reign in his kingdom as the Son of man.

§ 24. But what then, has He on *earth?* A *reformatory* for those who are lost, and an *educational institution* for those who have been saved, both being under the immediate *direction of the Holy Ghost,* His representative and prefect

(or vicar) in this province, and *administered* by *His faithful servants* to whom He entrusts His power and mysteries.

Verse 13. "And He called (*i. e.,* before He was taken up to heaven) His *ten servants,* and delivered them ten pounds, and said unto them, '*Occupy till I come*' (or, while I am away) cf. John 15, 26-27. But since the *director* of this reformatory and educational institution is *invisible* and *unknown* like the Master himself (John 14, 7), the *visible* appearance and activity of Christ rests solely on the bearers (or exponents) of His spirit: the chosen servants or ambassadors and witnesses in His stead. (1 Thes. 2 and 4; Matt. 10, 40). But here Paul asks: "*And who is sufficient for these things?* (*i. e.,* to minister the word of God that it be piercing like a *two-edged* sword and that some shall *perish* and others *live* through the same testimony (or, through the preaching of the same word). For we are not as *many,* which *corrupt* the word of God: but as of sincerity, but as of God, in the sight of God speak we in Christ." (2 Cor. 2, 14-17; Eph. 6, 17; 1 Pet. 4, 11).

No one can preach the gospel of Christ except those who have learned it and received is as a gift from God Himself, and have been chosen for it (Rom. 10, 15). They alone seek anxiously after Christ and work for the *kingdom of God,* which does not come with *outward show* (or, with observation, Luc. 17, 20), and of which it cannot and will not be said, "Lo here! or Lo, there it is," because it is established within, in the hearts of the believers, that kingdom of which the worldly, the carnal, would be the last to think or say, "Behold, *this* is the real true *kingdom of God,* in so far as it can be looked for and found *on earth* until the day of the second coming of the Lord. *All* who lay claim to the name of Christ and the heritage of the saints should become like to its followers!" Aye, nobody in the world will say and maintain of this spiritual kingdom of God, in

its humble, despised form (1 Cor. 1, 26-28), where it exists in truth, that it is that, which Christ intends to work in every one who is to enter into His eternal kingdom. They are the servants of Christ who, in harmony with the purpose of the gospel, strive for the conversion and salvation of the sinners, and the building up of His body, the church, and the presentation of the saints that are called, in the perfection of Christ Jesus (Eph. 2, 20 ff; 4, 1-16; 2 Cor. 11, 2; 13, 9; Col. 1, 27 ff.). They alone can value the souls of men according to their *true* worth, knowing, that in *Christ* nothing avails but a *new creature,* faith which works by love, and the keeping of the commandments of God, (Gal. 6, 15; 5-6; 1 Cor. 7, 19), and that *no* man who *now* in the time of salvation is not saved by a regeneration (or, new birth) can *ever* enter the kingdom of God *afterwards* (2 Cor. 5, 13 ff.; 6, 1 ff.; John 3, 3). And for this reason they are so very zealous of the Lord that people are inclined to say, "They are fools" (Acts 26, 24). Let us now ask the question: Where is that divine *reformatory* for the *sinners* and that educational *institution* for the *saved?* It certainly is *in* the world, but not *of* the world. "The light shineth in darkness, and the darkness comprehended it not." Is it the *established church? No,* for how could it recognize and carry out the mission *"to seek and to save that which was lost,"* when it itself is looked upon by all its followers, heads and members, as the true *Christian church?* The established church is the exact counterpart of the Jewish church in the Old Testament. The latter was also designed for a vineyard of the Lord, but the husbandmen, the *priests and Levites,* were wicked servants; they rendered the lord of the vineyard *no fruits;* they allowed all and everything to grow wild in sin, and they themselves were the leaders therein. Therefore God frequently sent *special servants, the prophets,* to them to remind them of their duty. But

what happened? "Some they scorned and beat; others they wounded and sent away empty, and still others were stoned and killed." It is the same now with the established church: the clergy or priests bring *God* no *fruits* by the conversion or saving of sinners; therefore God from time to time sent and still is sending *special servants* or messengers to bid the clergy and the laity to do penance and be mindful of their duty. But these messengers fare no better than those in the Old Testament; and it *must* be so, how else could the scriptures be fulfilled? (Matt. 23, 34.)

It is chiefly through such special servants that God at all times has begotten and gathered a live seed from the dead multitude of the established church for His holy congregation in heaven, that all may not perish. But what is most astonishing about this: the greatest hypocrites in the established church do not hesitate to attribute to themselves such results gained without their help, and declare them to be fair and promising signs of life in their church, in order to prove that it was not as corrupted as people would make it; but while doing this they cannot help raising a cry against the new *sectarians,* thus denouncing the *work of Christ* as *sectarianism* and *Christ* Himself as a *sectarian.* The wicked clergy certainly know their *duty and obligation* to bring forth the *fruit* of the gospel in the people, but if they fail in this they take comfort in the thought that all the fruit does not become evident now; and because they themselves render no fruit they loathe to see others render it, and therefore they hate, abuse and persecute the vessels chosen by God for the revival of life. Through such intruders and (as they say) *uncalled* and unauthorized *teachers,* censurers and sectarians and their activity, they see themselves mightily affronted and prostituted before the people, and their shame becomes manifest in a two-fold manner. They therefore stand upon their official dignity

and are not slow in dealing out blows to God's messengers of whom they claim that they *encroach upon their office.* "It is for us, (they say), to see that the people are instructed, there is no need of such new teachers and sectarians, who force themselves in between us and only cause confusion." But where are your *fruits,* gentlemen? God expects *fruit* from His husbandmen. But the wicked clergy while they fail to render God the fruits of their ministry, attempt the more eagerly to seize the inheritance and remove the rightful heir. "That this is a rebellious people, lying children, children that will not hear the law of the Lord. Which say to the seers, see not: and to the prophets, prophesy not unto us right things, speak unto us smooth things, prophesy deceits. Get you out of the way, turn aside out of the path, cause the Holy One of Israel to cease from before us. Wherefore thus saith the Holy One of Israel, Because ye despise this word, and trust in oppression and perverseness, and stay thereon, therefore this iniquity shall be to you as a breach ready to fall, swelling out in a high wall, whose breaking cometh suddenly at an instant. And he shall break it as the breaking of the potter's vessel that is broken in pieces; he shall not spare: so that there shall not be found in the bursting of it a shred to take fire from the hearth, or to take water withal out of the pit." (Isa. 30, 9-14). And because these churchmen try to make a monopoly of their office (or their office their exclusive monopoly) they never have known or comprehended the divine institution of the sending of prophets. The latter are a thorn in their eyes and their flesh and it will be hard for them to have kicked against the thorns ("pricks"). Let us therefore hear what the Lord says further.

§ 26. Verse 14. "*But his citizens hated him,* and sent *a message* after him, saying, *We will not have this man to reign over us.*" This affords us a glance *forward* from the

first coming of Christ, not backward; into the time and the history of the New Testament, not the Old Testament, the type thereof, however, we again find in the history of the people of Israel under the Old Testament. Even in the economy of the Law, God had planned that Israel should and would be His particular people and He their king. It was to be a true *kingdom of God,* governed by His immediate direction (= a theocracy). Nothing was wanting therefor except a new heart, a spiritual mind for the entire people. In order to be obedient unto such an invisible king, the commandments, written by God on tables of stone must also be written in their hearts. But just herein they were deficient, because sin was not yet atoned for, and the sacrifices prescribed by the Law only reminded the people of their sins but could not remove them. The commandments (or Law?) written outwardly gave them no new heart, nor mind and spirit, and no strength to keep them (it). They (it) only revealed and stirred up sin for the future redemption. So for some time things went on, lame and halting; that was the time of the Judges. At last the people had become tired of their *invisible* king and they demanded a *visible* king, like *all* the *nations* around them had.

Now, what had only been tried and designed in the Old Testament was actually carried out in the New Testament, when sin had been atoned for by the death of the mediator: Christ, as the only spiritual king of His people has ascended His throne at the right hand of the Father and through His spirit rules in the hearts of His people (subjects): a kingdom of God in truth, a glory (revealed) as of the only begotten of the Father full of grace and truth! In so far, of course, the kingdom of God is also *on earth;* however it is not a visible, but an invisible spiritual kingdom of which it cannot be said, "Lo *here,* lo *there* it is." Supposing now, if the established church were the true

church or communion of Christ, we should not be at a loss where to look for the kingdom of God; then we could say, "Behold, the kingdom of God is *everywhere,* wherever you turn your glance!" And it is true, there is a certain relationship between the established church and Christ and between Christ and the established church; but what are the relations between them? The relationship is that of *citizens* to their king and *supreme lord* (*sorereign*) and their relations to Him those of *rebels, deserters* (*renegades*) and *enemies,* like those of the rebel Absalom's to his father David. "But his citizens hated him and sent a message after him (to heaven), saying, We will not have this man to reign over us." These his *citizens* are none others but the false, *nominal* Christians, who gradually penetrated the church, especially by establishing *infant-baptism* from the third century on, until they constituted the bulk of it and had reduced the *inward spiritual* essence of its kingdom of grace and truth to *outward carnal* forms and institutions. With the first Christians it certainly was different; they lived and walked *in the Spirit* as it behooves the saints of God; they well knew the way to heaven where Christ had preceded them, and followed His footsteps through sufferings and death (John 14, 1-4). From them their aftercomers had remembered the way well enough at least, to be able to send a message after Him, renouncing their obedience as His citizens (subjects). The *carnal* could no longer reconcile themselves to an invisible spiritual master and desired to have a visible secular chief. This happened when *Christianity, i. e.,* the outward *confession* of the name of Christ, was made the established religion of the Roman Empire, at the time of emperor Constantine, 325 A. D., because from that time on the people were called the citizens of the empire of Christ, and yet they were no longer obedient and subject unto Him. The carnal *nominal Christians*

hate Christ and care naught about Him as their master and king, for it is no longer He who rules in their hearts through the sceptre of His kingdom, the sceptre of righteousness; they have chosen *another* king for themselves, who promises them, instead of the cross and freedom from sin, nothing but good days in temporal luxury, riches, fortune and honor. The same offer he also made the Lord of heaven; but He rejected it. (Matt. 4, 8 ff; Heb. 12, 2). But even *Satan* is not so liberal with his gifts and the glory of this world, if one does not bind himself to *serve* and worship *him.* This should be remembered by those who believe, that along with their *Christianity* they can enjoy all the pleasures and honors of the world and in the *love of the world* remain disciples and followers of Christ. And so it happened that Satan, the prince of the world, met with a complete success among the false Christians, when he worked the same plan among them, which he, as a prelude and type, had to try first with Christ, although without success; and what he before could not accomplish with all the heat of persecutions, he now brought about by the *deceit of sin.* However, there is still a connection even between the nominal Christians and Christ, which connection is expressed by the phrase *"his citizens,"* for they bear His *name;* otherwise they would not at the end be *punished as rebels.* Though they *are not* His obedient subjects but His enemies, they *ought to be* such: their name bears testimony to that. If *they* have no claim on Christ, *He* certainly has the claim against them, that they have had His word and used His name. "The Lord, who is a jealous God, will not hold him guiltless that taketh His holy name deceitfully, rendering it valueless." Here the prophecy of the apostle Peter applies (2 Pet. 2), concerning the great corruption, from which God will deliver only the godly, who know the mystery of godliness and preserve it in a pure heart, a good conscience and an undissembled faith.

§ 27. As the Lord was about to return to the Father to reign in heaven, He said to His disciples (Luc. 24, 46-49), "Thus, it is written, and thus it behooved Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name among all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And ye are *witnesses* of these things. And behold, I send the promise of my Father, the Holy Ghost, upon you." Everywhere, as here, Jesus calls His disciples *witnesses.* What is a witness? In the legal sense of the word it is a person who in a judicial *contest* between two parties gives testimony of what he knows, has *seen* or *heard* of the case. So it is here. For well nigh 1900 years now a great *controversy* or *contest* has been carried on in the world about the *nature* (or personality) *of Christ* and the *possession of men.* The Devil and the world deny Christ and the redemption in Him (1 John 2 and 4). In return the *apostles* were appointed as *witnesses* for the truth, that they give testimony of what they saw and heard and felt with their hands, of the word of life: (1 John 1) that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ, the *Son of God,* Redeemer, and heir to the world, the only rightful Lord and owner of mankind whom He has purchased with His blood. Aye, the apostles have until now been the *only* witnesses of *truth* in this suit, from Jerusalem on to the ends of the earth, and from the beginning of the gospel to the end of the world and time; for even so-called Christendom takes sides with Satan and aids him in the *lie,* and has become an *Anti-Christendom.* If we had to depend upon the traditional *church-doctrine,* and if the *written* testimony of the *apostles* had not been left to us, *no person* would any longer be able to recognize and find the *true Christ.* To know Him and to find the life in Him, we must learn to leave tradition and church-doctrine entirely out of consideration and hear the testimony of the apostles. While form-

erly the Devil and his Anti-Christendom in the world directly *forbade* and strictly prohibited the reading and hearing of this testimony, it was later on so much the more *distorted* and rendered ineffective by a false interpretation on the part of the orthodox and philosophical believers. Now *mockery* is employed with even greater effect, just as at the time when Christ, the Word of Life stood before the synedrium (council of Jerusalem), before Pilate and Herod, and was sentenced to death as a seducer and impostor. Christ's cause is always defeated before the tribunal of the world. Aye, even at the time of Emperor Constantine, when Christianity appeared to be triumphant and was made the established religion, *Christ gained* so little in the world that it was rather a victory of the *Anti-Christendom.*

Such have been the conditions of the so-called Christendom in the world for 1500 years now. A long time! And still we are longing for the Advent of Christ and His kingdom, like those, who, before His first appearance in the flesh, were waiting for the consolation and hope of Israel. And how will it be at His Advent? First He will cause His servants to appear before Him and give an account of their stewardship (of what each of them has done with his money). Even then a diversity will appear in the use of the gifts and powers, in diligence and faithfulness. One renders the ten-fold of what he had received, another the five-fold, etc. But none of the faithful servants ascribes the gain to himself. They say, "Lord, thy pound has gained ten, five pounds, etc." To God alone they render honor and attribute the gain to His grace and His gift. In every gift of God as in every seed is hidden the power of propagation; in *faithful* hands it will increase *by itself.* But just the diversity in the gains comprehends the idea that it depends upon the diligence and faithfulness of the *receiver* of the gift *how much* he may gain with it. If in the hands of *one*

servant, *one* pound may yield *ten* pounds, then this is the scale according to which *each* pound, employed with the same diligence, might yield. For this reason there is also a *diversity* in the reward the servants receive, according to the scale of their gains. Yet the Lord is pleased with *every* servant who is found *faithful, i. e.,* who employs the pound entrusted to him and increases it. "It is required in stewards that a man be found faithful." (1 Cor. 4, 2).

But what is this *employing* of the gifts received and the *winning* of others? This is rendered more prominent by the contrast brought out in the servant who had *not* employed his pound. He comes, saying, "Lord, behold, here is thy pound which I have kept laid up in a *napkin:* For *I feared thee,* thou art an *austere* man; thou takest up that thou layedst not down, and reapest that thou didst not sow." When the Lord bestows His grace of life upon us, it is His will that we, by a faithful employment of His gift, awaken a new life *in others.* Those who are in the grace of God are the *light of the world* and the salt of the earth; and as we well know, nobody would light *a light at night* in order to hide it, and the salt which has lost its savour has become useless. Even so *God* does not light His light in us that we should put it under a bushel, and if God allows His children of light, after they have been converted from the *power* of darkness to still remain in this world of darkness for some time, He does so in order to let a light shine for the children of night and darkness, that they also might awake and rise from the dead and be enlightened by Christ. Hence it is *a grace* for the world. But then the children of darkness soon cry out, "What are these restless night-walkers (somnambulists?) doing that they disturb us when we want to *rest* and *sleep?*" Perhaps they even arouse themselves from their sleep, but not in order to rise to a new life in Christ, but to put out the hated light and to beat the

bearers of the light. This is about the general experience of all the times; and not few of the children of light have become frightened on this account, and in order to escape the beating and blows they *hid* their light from the world; and because they fear men more than God they keep their pound *laid up* in the napkin, saying, that every one should be allowed to abide by his belief (rather superstition or unbelief); saying it is better to be still and keep your faith to yourself; that God would certainly find out His *elect* even without much preaching, and what other napkins there may be under which wickedness, slothfulness and fear of men and of the sufferings of this present time seek to hide themselves, that many do not *openly confess* and hence *secretly deny* Christ and the grace of life, although they know that without this grace of a new life every one who has grown up in his old nature must be lost, and that God after bestowing this grace upon us and illuminating our minds with His knowledge allows us to remain in this world for some time yet that we should *bear witness* of the *light* and life which in Christ has appeared for us. And while we testify to save others with ourselves, the sufferings of this present time which we have to bear for it, must serve for *our own good* and help to gain our fulness and perfection. Because of this secret flight from the cross and aversion to suffering, the wicked servant at the end finds cause to lie to the face of the Master that he had feared him, while in fact, he had only feared men, and to charge him with being an *austere* man, who submitted his servants to sufferings and demanded more of them than they could accomplish. But it would be a great mistake to rank this servant with the citizens who have fallen away. The falling away of the nominal Christians dates from an *earlier time*, and the *present* Christians of this class only continue in that which their *predecessors* have been doing in the past. Not so

with the wicked servant. He is the type of those who *really* have received *grace* and the knowledge of truth, who also have faith in the truth and can tell *among their own kind* of many an inner experience and still have not the faith and courage to confess Christ *before the world* and to suffer for Him. But their wisdom (*i. e.,* cunning) will do them no good, and it will only turn out to their greater damnation that they *have had* the knowledge of truth and the grace of life and *not used* it to glorify God and save others with themselves. In the end they are not much better, perhaps worse than the declared enemies, and their fate will be the same!

§ 29. The whole parable, therefore, presents to us three classes of people, just as we find it as a type in the judgment over *Sodom,* for here we have *spiritual Sodom* over which God's righteous judgment will come; and here the Lord warns: *Remember Lot's wife!* Just as *all the inhabitants* of the wicked cities perished by the fire from heaven and only *some few* barely escaped *destruction,* and of those *who had gone out,* even *Lot's wife* became a *pillar of salt* because she looked *back,* so we have here in the parable before us these three classes:

(1) The *rebel citizens, i. e.,* all false, *nominal Christians* who were *never converted* and regenerated, who became guilty of all the iniquities of Sodom (Eze. 16, 44-50), and still pretend to be *Christians* because, as they assert, they lineally descended from the first church of Christ. But thus speaks the Lord to this Jerusalem here below: Thy birth and thy nativity is of the land of Canaan; thy father was an Amorite and thy mother an Hittite (Eze. 16, 3). Their fate is the sentence of damnation (Phil. 3, 18, 19), for the Lord says in our parable (verse 27): But those mine enemies, which would not that I should reign over them, bring hither, and slay them before me. (cf. Rev. 19).

(2) The second class is portrayed in the *faithless servant* who, though he had received grace did not use it in the service and obedience to God, and therefore loses it again according to the divine rule, "From him that hath not (employed the gift received and rendered fruit therefrom) even that he hath shall be taken away from him." (Verse 26). So it happened that Lot's wife perished even after she had been saved. Their fate is likewise damnation; for these are the words of the Lord, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." (cf. Matt. 25, 30). This *severe* and harsh sentence they deserved from Him whom they in their lifetime, because of a light affliction which is but for a moment (2 Cor. 4, 17) considered an *austere* man. He now judges them out of their own mouths, and they must experience the full *severity* of Him whose *kindness* is forever the song of praise of all, who from their love for Him "loved not their lives unto the death" (Rev. 12, 11). These latter are:

(3) The *faithful servants* together with those *whom they have won;* for it needs scarcely to be explained that the money which they have gained with their pounds from the *bank* by putting it on interest there, is neither gold nor silver but *living men* whom they have *saved* from the world. Consequently also the souls won from the world are saved with the faithful servants and will enter into the kingdom of Christ, their Lord, and the promised but *still impending* great *sabbath,* or millennial day of rest of the children of God. And those additionally gained ones are the crown of the true servants of the Lord on His day. (Heb. 4; Rev. 20; I Thes. 2, 19 ff; Phil. 2, 16).

Hence, of the things we have spoken, this is the sum: Who receives *no grace* for a new life is a *sinner,* has no means but only debts; such are the *rebel citizens.* But it is their own fault that they have no grace; for everyone

who desires it receives it without compensation. Therefor the law was given which should work within us a knowledge of sin and with this knowledge arouse our mind and will for the good, and awaken a *longing* for grace under the gospel which follows the law. But this grace does *not* consist *only* in a *forgiveness* of our old trespasses for which Christ *suffered death,* but moreover and especially in the *power of a new life* from God and in God, for which Christ was *resurrected* and raised to the right hand of God the Father as a prince and saviour, to bestow the gift of the Holy Ghost on all who call upon Him. *In Christ,* resurrected from the dead, God has *wrought an exceeding greatness of His power* which will also pass over into all the members of His body, which is *the church,* the *fulness* of Him that *filleth* all in all. (Eph. 1, 18-23.) Hence he who fails to have grace has never desired it. But who ever once *received* the grace of life, and still does not employ it in the service of the Lord will be *doubly* poor and miserable on the day of recompense; as one who loses a possession which once *was his own,* feels his loss more keenly than another who never owned it. Therefore only *those* remain as heirs to the eternal life and kingdom who *remain steadfast* amid all opposition and in the fire of the trials of this world until the *end,* that they may prove pure gold, silver and precious stones on the day of Christ.

§ 30. In the scriptures the exaltation of Christ Jesus to the right hand of God the Father is ascribed to His *merits* and *obedience* as the *Son of man* and God's servant who, with His incarnation had left His everlasting glory which He had had with the Father from the beginning and which He *won* again in order to *bestow* it on all who are *obedient* unto Him. (John 17; Phil. 2.) He was not merely deified (as the Arians and Socians taught), as if He had been *nothing* before His incarnation and had had His *beginning* on earth like us ourselves. To Him applies a phrase which

can be used of neither men nor angels, but beside Him only of the Holy Ghost who is divine Himself, namely the phrase, that He had *gone out from the Father* and came into the world in order to cleanse our *human nature,* by His obedience unto the death on the cross, from the sin of Adam, to redeem it from the power of Satan, to sanctify and glorify it by uniting it with His *divine nature.* In the *man Jesus* of Nazareth dwelt the *only-begotten Son of the Father.* As soon as He in His childhood had become conscious of Himself, he knew that He had descended from the Father in heaven (Luc. 2, 49), and before had been with the Father; *we,* however, can not recollect having been in existence *before* our birth. But through our *new birth* from above, of water and of the Spirit we enter into a relation with the Father similar to that of the *Son* when He was *on earth:* we know that the *spirit of adoption* which we receive, is the *spirit of the Son* going out from the Father, and through this we become *conscious* like Jesus of our descent from the Father; we then *know* that we are *of God* while the *whole world* lies *in wickedness* (1 John 5, 19), "for both he that *sanctifieth* and they who are *sanctified* are *all* of one Father; for which cause he is not ashamed to call them brethren" (Heb. 2, 11). Thus we receive, in addition to our cleansed *human nature,* the *divine* nature of the Son (Rom. 8; 2 Pet. 1); and as regenerated children of God we must, in our following after Christ, *earn* our *share* in the future glory like Jesus, *i. e.,* we must become *worthy* of it by our *obedience* to the will of God in our efforts and sufferings, although it is to Him alone that we owe our *share* in the salvation, because of *His* obedience unto His death on the cross. But if we are not faithful and do not suffer with Him and *conquer* the world and the Devil, *remaining constant* unto the end, then we can not be raised to glory with Him, although He died for us (2 Tim. 2, 10 ff; Rom. 8, 17

ff); aye, even if we had received the beginning of this new existence *in the Spirit* we might still end in the *flesh* and miss our goal and be lost. (Heb. 3 and 4; Gal. 3 and 5.) The dead are judged *by their own works, i. e.,* according to the *strict* law of the justice of God and *not according to grace.* It is certain from the scriptures and stands as a divine truth that they who would enter into the other world and attain the resurrection of the righteous must be found *worthy* thereof, that we must *deserve* it even though the whole world should deny it. However, the *old man* in us can, of course, not do or attain this, but only the *new* man which, *after God,* is created in righteousness and holiness of truth (Eph. 4; 2 Cor. 5).

We will not err if we assume that they who do not accept this truth but deny it are the *foolish virgins,* who, it is true, take their *lamps* but have no *vessels of oil* with them. They do believe in Christ as He *appeared in the flesh* and suffered to bear our *sins,* and believe that they, poor sinners as they are, will and must be saved by His righteousness and merits alone; but they never think of receiving and *embracing* Him also as the *spirit of holiness* (or sanctification) and of the necessity of making themselves *deserving* of their share in His glory by their obedience; this never enters their mind; yes, they consider this a *false doctrine* (heresy). Here the truth written in James 2, finds application to its full extent: "But wilt thou know, O vain man, that faith without works is dead?" etc.

§ 31. And now, as Christ has gone to heaven to receive His kingdom as the Son of man, so He will come again to call us to account before His judgment seat. Until then the gospel of the kingdom will be preached, that we may turn to it and prepare ourselves for it; and all, friend and foe, exert their efforts here (Luc. 16, 16), the former to attain it for their salvation, the latter to resist it to their

damnation. (Phil. 1, 27-30; 2 Thes. 1). But as here at the beginning the picture is shown to us of *ten servants* who are waiting for their lord when he will return from the wedding (Luc. 12, 35-40), we see this picture at the end assume the figure of *ten virgins* who go forth to meet the bridegroom and the bride, to be admitted to the marriage. Those who are *gathered* in heaven will then not arrive any sooner than they who are still *waiting* on earth, for even they will not attain to their first resurrection until the time of the sound of the last trumpet, *they too* are waiting for the manifestation of the sons of God. (Rom. 8; 1 Cor. 15; Rev. 6, 9 ff). And if in the latter times the number of the saved should be thousands and hundreds of thousands on earth, they could not say: The kingdom of God and Christ *on earth* has now arrived, lest they would fall back into the error of the false Anti-Christian church of the world, whose followers imagine that they themselves are the kingdom of Christ. For this reason they cannot go forth from Babylon to meet the bridegroom; if they understood the mystery that the church of the first-born is *in heaven* (Heb. 12, 22), and that nowhere on earth it can be said: Here is Christ and His kingdom; and if they comprehended their error of sin, they would not rise against the seed of God as they do, but would be quick to save their souls. Yet how should *they* go forth from Babylon who consider Babylon as the church of Christ? They were never converted or born anew from the Jerusalem in heaven, although they think they are believers: because if they had once been converted in truth, they would perceive and know that they were not converted or born of God before, and therefore did not belong to the body or church of Christ, but only from that time on when God called them from the power of darkness and translated them into the kingdom of the Son of His Love. In this respect the epistle of *James* is of the utmost importance for

our time. Nowhere, perhaps, is the distinction and the contrast between the true Christians and the false nominal Christians drawn more plainly than in this epistle (esp. chapter 5). The former he describes as *poor* and oppressed men, the latter as *rich* men and oppressors, usurers and sensualists, as men who are unjust, and unscrupulously commit acts of violence and most revolting sins. To the former, who for the sake of their faith endure many temptations, he speaks as to brothers in a *kind* and *consoling* tone, to the latter, as to strangers, in a tone *stern* and *harsh,* rebuking them as *sinners* and announcing the judgment of God upon them, to show them that he has no part in them. This distinction becomes still more significant, since it is a *prophecy* concerning the *latter days* before the Advent of the Lord and Judge of the world, warning us not to keep brotherly fellowship with the unrighteous but to admonish and earnestly reprove them for their sins that they, if possible, may still be saved. It, therefore, becomes the duty of the saints who are called to remind the world of the word of God and warn all, also the pretended Christians: *Repent* ye and be converted, for *the kingdom of heaven is at hand* (but not yet come), just as the apostles had to preach after the Holy Ghost had been bestowed upon them and they were not permitted to know the time when the Lord would come again and with Him the *visible* kingdom of God and the times of refreshing from the presence of the Lord.

§ 32. But they who now think that the established church is the church of Christ, are like unto those who at the time of the first coming of Christ in the flesh imagined that He had come to reveal the kingdom of God *at once.* They do not see or understand that, before He will again restore the kingdom to Israel, His chosen people, Christ must be away from earth for a long time, sojourning in heaven, in order to rule His kingdom there and then to return. As long as

He is away and invisible Israel will remain hardened and impenitent, and the door of the gospel remain open to the Gentiles, so that when He restores the kingdom to Israel, He may at the same time lead the multitude from the Gentiles to them, as it was promised to Abraham, that he should be a father of many nations. But at the time when Israel will be received again to the grace of God and the last shall become the first, the Lord will purge His *old floor* on which chaff has been threshed so long that little good fruit has been left,—yes, He will thoroughly cleanse the threshing floor of the *old Christendom* and burn the chaff with unquenchable fire, that He may lay on *new* material, and that the nations whom the Word of Life has not yet reached may be converted to the God of Jacob, after Satan, who had bound them in chains of darkness until then, shall be bound himself during the thousand years. Then the earth shall be filled with righteousness and the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover (fill) the sea. Then the mountain of the Lord's house shall indeed be established in the top of the mountains and be exalted above the hills, and all nations shall flow unto it and say: Come ye and let us go to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and He will teach us of His ways and we will walk in His paths. (Isa. 2). Then shall also the word of the prophet be fulfilled in its full extent of length and breadth and depth and heighth: "He shall sprinkle many nations; the kings shall shut their mouths at Him: for that *which had not been told them* they shall see; and that *which they had not heard* shall they consider." (Isa. 52, 15). But in this present time and especially in the old Christendom the word still holds good: Lord *who believeth our report?* and to whom is the arm of the Lord revealed? etc. (Isa. 53, 1 ff). For here the Lord is *crucified,* wherever His name is spoken and *known,* and who will be saved therefrom will be as glean-

ings; because now is the time when once more, and even in a truer sense than with the typical people of Israel, will be fulfilled the vision and prophecy of Isaiah, when he saw the Lord Jesus sitting on the throne of His glory before He appeared in His humiliation and the habit of a servant (Isa. 6) and heard His voice, saying, "Whom shall I send and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me. And He said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted and healed. Then said I, Lord how long? And He answered, Until the cities be wasted, without inhabitant, and the houses without man, and the land be utterly desolate, and the Lord have removed men far away, and there be a great forsaking in the midst of the land. But yet in it shall be a tenth, and it shall return, and shall be eaten: as a teil tree, and as an oak, whose substance is in them, when they cast their leaves: *so the holy seed shall be the substance thereof.*"

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